United Nations A/C.4/59/SR.6

General Assembly
Fifty-ninth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
13 December 2004
English
Original: French

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 6th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 8 October 2004, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Kyaw Tint Swe ..... (Myanmar)

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04-54218 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

General debate (*continued*)

Agenda item 20: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*continued*) (A/59/23, A/59/134 and A/C.4/59/4)

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Agenda item 82: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*) (A/59/74)

1. **Mr. Okio** (Republic of the Congo) noted that the current situation of the Non-Self-Governing Territories offered little hope of ending colonialism during the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. Indeed, that goal seemed to be receding year after year. The Committee's role was therefore more and more important, and it must find ways of tackling the root causes of the problem. Specific measures to promote the economic and social development of the Non-Self-Governing Territories and full cooperation by the administering Powers were vital, and that in turn required real and active partnership between those Powers and the Special Committee. The right to self-determination was a fundamental one and, in the case of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, the notion of human rights must be understood holistically. The international community therefore had a duty to assist those Territories and to undertake to implement the principles and resolutions it had itself adopted.

2. With reference to the report of the Special Committee (A/59/23), it was useful to undertake regular reviews of the situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The case-by-case approach proposed for the implementation of the plan of action for the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism had little chance of success since the populations concerned were not familiar with the guiding framework for action on their part, namely General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), or with the new developments that affected them, as the recent regional seminars had shown. It was therefore important to improve the dissemination of information to the Non-Self-Governing Territories and to better equip United Nations bodies to strengthen their activity in that area. It was noteworthy that the Department of Public Information and the United Nations Development Programme were making serious efforts in that regard, and that some States granted scholarships to nationals of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Visiting missions should be undertaken more frequently as they enabled the United Nations to better ascertain the situation and give the Territories more effective assistance. They could also facilitate the elaboration of policies actually geared to local needs.

3. Concerning the question of Western Sahara, where the report of the Secretary-General (document A/59/134) had shown the obstacles involved, he stressed that his Government had excellent relations with all the countries of the Maghreb. He further reaffirmed its support for efforts being made under the auspices of the United Nations and encouraged the parties and neighbouring countries to pursue dialogue with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, with a view to achieving a political settlement that took into account the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination, the interests of the populations concerned, and the requirements for peace and cooperation in the region.

4. **Mr. Moleko** (Lesotho) recalled that, in spite of the considerable progress achieved by the United Nations in the area of decolonization, as the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism reached the half-way mark there were still 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories remaining. Without minimizing the cooperation of most of the

administering Powers, he lamented the slow pace of the decolonization process.

5. The delegation of Lesotho was particularly concerned that the people of Western Sahara were still denied the right of self-determination. It welcomed the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to find a mutually acceptable political solution to the problem, and fully supported all General Assembly and Security Council resolutions calling for decolonization of the Territory, particularly through the implementation of the Settlement Plan and the organization of a referendum. Only the holding of a referendum, without delay, could lead to a just and lasting solution to the conflict. It was regrettable that the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly with respect to the Non-Self-Governing Territories had been ineffectual. He urged the Committee to give closer consideration to the concerns expressed each year by the representatives of those Territories and the petitioners on the issue of self-determination because colonialism must come to an end.

6. **Mr. Gregoire** (Dominica) said that his delegation agreed with the statement made by the representative of Saint Lucia, on behalf of the member States of the Caribbean Community, putting decolonization issues in a regional perspective.

7. Although 80 countries had achieved political independence within the framework of the decolonization process, there remained 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories, seven of which were situated in the Caribbean region. The United Nations and the Committee therefore still had a huge task ahead to change their political status.

8. Dominica attached great importance to the self-determination of the Non-Self-Governing Territories and believed that the process of decolonization should be accelerated and greater emphasis placed on implementation of various resolutions aimed at eradicating colonialism. The international community must demonstrate genuine commitment in that regard.

9. One of the challenges facing the Territories was the inadequacy of relevant information regarding political options. In most of the Territories, people continued to be unaware of the legitimate political options. If there was going to be constitutional and political advancement, a coordinated programme for the dissemination of unbiased information to the Territories on the various political status options would be essential.

10. In that context, he underscored the important role played by the regional seminars, such as the one held recently by the Special Committee of 24 in Madang, Papua New Guinea. Such seminars provided a framework for the frank exchange of views and valuable input from the people of the Territories and representatives of civil society. The next seminar was scheduled to be held in the Caribbean region.

11. He welcomed the work done by the Special Committee of 24, as described in document A/59/23. He fully supported that report and endorsed the proposal of the Chairman of the Special Committee to conduct a mid-term review of the implementation of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, since such a review would speed up the decolonization process. He also endorsed the view that the Special Committee should develop a mechanism to systematically review, on an annual basis, the implementation of the specific recommendations on decolonization emanating from General Assembly resolutions and the plan of action for the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

12. Dominica reiterated its support for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara and, in that regard, called for implementation of the Peace Plan which had been recently reaffirmed in the Security Council.

13. **Mr. Ortiz Gandarillas** (Bolivia) said that the current session provided an opportunity for the international community to redouble its efforts and to reaffirm commitments undertaken to achieve United Nations decolonization goals. The Bolivian delegation had studied the report of the Special Committee (A/59/23) and had taken due note of the decision of Member States to implement the Declaration and the relevant United Nations resolutions, the cooperation of the administering Powers, the participation of representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the work of the Special Committee, and the organization of weeks of solidarity, regional seminars and visiting missions.

14. Yet, despite all those initiatives, at the midpoint of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism the process of decolonization still was not completed. He wondered what were the obstacles,

possible gaps or shortcomings and why, in spite of an abundance of information and the existence of action frameworks, the problem seemed insoluble. Thought should be given to how those obstacles could be surmounted, since all the parties concerned seemed to have the same goal. As food for such thought, he mentioned the remarkable work done by Tokelau and New Zealand, of which he had first-hand knowledge, and encouraged the Committee to seek inspiration from that example.

15. The thinking in the Committee should result in specific measures. In that regard, there were two priorities: raising the political awareness of the populations of the Non-Self-Governing Territories about the options proposed, and disseminating information. At the regional seminar held in Anguilla in 2003, it had been found that the inhabitants of the Territories were not aware of all the options available to them. Visiting missions and seminars were also quite useful to the work of the Special Committee and for relations between the Non-Self-Governing populations and the administering Powers. It was to be hoped that the end of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism would mark the end of colonialism.

16. **Mr. Guterres** (Timor-Leste) recalled that his country had been on the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories for more than 30 years and that he had personally had occasion to participate in the work of the Committee as a petitioner.

17. He paid a tribute to all countries, organizations and individuals that had shown solidarity with the Non-Self-Governing Territories, and had nurtured their inhabitants' hopes of freedom and justice, building strong human values such as tolerance, that had helped to prevent violence and terrorism. However, he regretted that there were still 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories and he hoped that, as a result of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the international community would continue to provide the economic, social and political support needed by the peoples of the Territories.

18. The delegation of Timor-Leste welcomed the 2004 Pacific regional seminar in Madang (Papua New Guinea) and progress made by Tokelau and New Zealand. It also noted the efforts of the Caribbean Community in fostering the integration of the Caribbean Non-Self-Governing Territories into their institutions. Timor-Leste congratulated the 56 States that had offered scholarships to nationals of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, and supported the draft resolution on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations.

19. Because of the longstanding ties with the leaders of the Frente POLISARIO and the fact that the two peoples had been united by a common struggle, shared similarities in their history and suffering, the people of Timor-Leste had always followed closely the struggle of the Sahrawi people. Recalling that the principle of a referendum on self-determination had been accepted over 10 years earlier by Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO, he said the delegation of Timor-Leste was disturbed by the slow pace of the process and the current difficulties described in the report of the Secretary-General (A/59/134). Nevertheless, the release of 100 prisoners of war by the Frente POLISARIO in February 2004 and the commitment by both parties to observe the ceasefire were encouraging.

20. As an independent State, Timor-Leste was seeking integration into the Association of South-East Asian Nations. In a world of interdependence and globalization, cultural similarities and a common language already united the peoples of the Maghreb region. It was the forward-looking vision of the Maghreb leaders that would unite their peoples and countries; colonial boundaries would disappear. The best means of achieving that was to grant the Sahrawi people the possibility of exercising their right to self-determination and independence, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV).

21. **Mr. Martins** (Angola) said that since the birth of the United Nations more than 60 Non-Self-Governing Territories, representing 80 million persons, had been decolonized and had achieved independence. However, 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories had not yet exercised their right to self-determination and there was concern as to whether the process of decolonization would be completed by 2010, as stipulated by the General Assembly Declaration on the Eradication of Colonialism.

22. In that connection, as regards the situation in Western Sahara, it was worrying that the ongoing negotiations between the parties did not seem to be

progressing. Angola continued to support a peaceful solution to that situation. The Settlement Plan and the Peace Plan drawn up by the former Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Baker, were a sound basis for the peaceful resolution of conflict in that Territory. The parties should also be encouraged to work together in order to achieve a peaceful resolution of the problem.

23. In the case of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories, the role played by the regional seminars and the visiting missions of the Special Committee of 24 should be underscored. They were useful for gathering information on the political options offered to the peoples in question: namely, independence or free association, as defined in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). His delegation hoped the administering Powers would cooperate fully with the Special Committee to facilitate such visiting missions. The Committee's proposals regarding the mid-term review of the implementation of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism in an attempt to move the process forward should also be supported. Angola also endorsed the idea that the Special Committee should establish an annual review mechanism to monitor implementation of specific recommendations for implementing the Plan of Action for the Second Decade.

24. The international community, and particularly the United Nations, the European Union and the African Union, should make an effort to persuade the parties concerned to respect the provisions of the United Nations Charter and other relevant legal instruments, in order to accelerate the decolonization process.

25. **Mr. Kafando** (Burkina Faso) said that, at the midpoint of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the goals of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) were far from being achieved, because 16 territories were still non-self-governing and millions of people were still unable to enjoy their fundamental right to self-determination. Consequently, it was necessary to enhance cooperation between the Special Committee on Decolonization and the administering Powers, which had particular obligations under the terms of the United Nations Charter.

26. The mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) would expire at the end of the month. The latest report of the Secretary-General on the question of Western Sahara (A/59/134) assessed the work still to be done in order to ensure the well-being of the Saharan people and restore peace to that part of the Maghreb. While the role played by the United Nations and the African Union was important, that of the parties to the dispute was even more so, inasmuch as they were principally affected, and peace and stability in the subregion was dependent on their actions.

27. **Mr. Chaudhry** (Pakistan), while underscoring that decolonization was one of the areas where the United Nations had been most successful and which had transformed the map of the globe, said that 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories still awaited decolonization and that, at the midpoint of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, much work remained.

28. Pakistan supported the work of the Special Committee on Decolonization as well as all the regional initiatives aimed at furthering the decolonization agenda, such as the Pacific Regional Seminar on Decolonization held recently in Papua New Guinea. Such seminars played an effective role in focusing discussions on matters concerning Non-Self-Governing Territories and also provided opportunities for the representatives of their peoples to present their views. Pakistan also commended the administering Powers that continued to show cooperation and flexibility in accelerating the decolonization process in certain Territories. The positive role played by New Zealand with regard to Tokelau was a case in point.

29. Nevertheless, the process was not limited to the issue of Non-Self-Governing Territories. The aim was to ensure that all peoples under colonial administration or foreign occupation were able to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination, a principle enshrined in the United Nations Charter and the essential prerequisite for friendly relations between States.

30. Even after independence, colonialism had left behind a bitter legacy of foreign occupation and violent confrontations in two regions of the world, Kashmir and Palestine, which for over half a century had been denied the exercise of their right to self-determination. Pakistan was firmly committed to a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute, one which was just and acceptable to India, Pakistan and the Kashmiri people. The Secretary-General had taken note of the important

strides made by India and Pakistan to improve their relations and to resolve outstanding issues.

31. **Mr. Zhang** Yishan (China) said that, with the support of the United Nations, historic progress had been made since the launching of the decolonization process. Nevertheless, 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories remained on the list of the Special Committee on Decolonization and it was the duty of the United Nations and the international community to bring the process to a successful conclusion.

32. When proclaiming the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, United Nations Member States had indicated that they all desired an early conclusion of the process. Consequently, the Chinese delegation called for greater cooperation between the administering Powers and the United Nations in order to allow the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination as soon as possible.

33. China had consistently supported the peoples of those Territories in their struggle for recognition of that right and it would continue to play an active part in the work of the United Nations in that area.

34. **Mr. Gallegos Chiriboga** (Ecuador) said that, as an ally of peace-loving nations, Ecuador supported the peaceful settlement of conflicts, law and international solidarity, tolerance, and strict respect for human rights and the moral principles that should govern relations between individuals and States.

35. The foreign policy of Ecuador was based essentially on self-determination of peoples, peace, cooperation, legal equality among States, condemnation of the threat or use of force as a means to settle conflicts, rejection of all forms of colonialism, neo-colonialism, discrimination or segregation and recognition of the right of peoples to self-determination and efforts to combat oppression, including economic exploitation.

36. In accordance with those principles and its legal tradition, Ecuador had supported the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, adopted by the General Assembly in 1960, and had also voted in favour of a number of related resolutions adopted by the United Nations.

37. The delegation of Ecuador was therefore concerned that, despite all the efforts made by the international community since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), there were still 16 Territories that for various reasons had not yet attained autonomy and independence. The Government of Ecuador therefore supported any initiative to enable those Territories to fulfil their legitimate aspirations and urged Member States and specialized agencies to promote that natural evolution of the legal personality and sovereignty of peoples.

38. **Mr. Alfa Zerandouro** (Benin) said that the United Nations had made considerable progress in the decolonization process. To resolve the situation in the 16 remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories, it must encourage constructive dialogue between parties aimed at a lasting peaceful solution.

39. Concerning the question of Western Sahara, the persistence of the dispute for nearly three decades was liable to undermine the bases for harmonious economic and social development in the Maghreb subregion and constituted a real problem for all of Africa. Without a political solution acceptable to the parties, the suffering of the peoples concerned would only grow. Everything must therefore be done to pursue efforts under United Nations auspices to find a rapid solution. A realistic political settlement must take into account both the higher interests of the people of Western Sahara and the preservation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Morocco.

40. **Mr. Mustafa** (Sudan) said that the Sudan had been among the first African countries to support peoples seeking independence. Although a good many of them have succeeded in doing so, some Non-Self-Governing Territories continued to have their rights flouted and suffered from political, economic and environmental damage due to colonization.

41. The General Assembly had given the Committee a very clear mandate in 1961 and, during the previous session, had asked it to study every possible means of implementing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and the Plan of Action for the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. Little progress had been made in that area, however. Therefore, there was a need to redouble efforts to convince the administering Powers that they must abide by the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, guarantee the progress of the peoples administered by them on all fronts and preserve their resources,

particularly natural resources, as such resources were indeed the property of the peoples of the Territories.

42. Concerning the question of Palestine and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, the Government of the Sudan recalled the injustice suffered by the Palestinians struggling against an oppressive occupation force that was plundering their natural and economic resources while the Security Council and United Nations remained powerless. The credibility of the United Nations might therefore rightly be called into question when it affirmed that it was doing everything possible to help peoples to exercise their right to self-determination.

43. **Mr. Mutisi** (Zimbabwe) said that the question of decolonization remained an unfulfilled objective of the United Nations. While the Second Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism was well under way, 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories were still seeking their independence. Zimbabwe, which had experienced colonialism and still suffered from its consequences, understood the situation in those Territories and called for more concerted action to give them satisfaction. It also expressed its gratitude to the administering Powers that were making commendable progress in implementing the United Nations resolutions.

44. Concerning the question of Western Sahara, he associated himself with other delegations that urged all the parties to implement without further delay the Security Council resolutions supporting the peace plan. The people of Western Sahara, like all peoples experiencing the same lot, should be able to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination.

45. **Mr. Sow** (Guinea) said that, since the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, significant progress had been made in the area of decolonization, mainly thanks to the efforts of the Special Committee of 24.

46. Guinea had been among the initiators of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and was an active member of the Special Committee; therefore, it followed with particular attention the development of the decolonization process. It would continue to contribute to the eradication of colonialism.

47. Concerning specific cases, his delegation welcomed the conclusions of the Pacific Regional Seminar on Decolonization and the significant progress made in the settlement of the question of Tokelau and called on the administering Powers of the other Territories to increase their cooperation with the Special Committee.

48. Regarding Western Sahara, Guinea was in favour of a political settlement of the conflict under international law. It encouraged the parties concerned to strengthen their cooperation with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in order to find, with the help of friendly countries, a negotiated, just, lasting and mutually acceptable solution of the conflict, guaranteeing peace, stability and interdependent development of the Arab Maghreb Union and thus of Africa as a whole. In that regard, the Guinean delegation welcomed the encouraging address recently delivered by the King of Morocco, in which he had solemnly reaffirmed his country's readiness to cooperate both with the United Nations and with the parties concerned, with a view to settling the conflict. It was to be hoped that the Committee's deliberations would give the ongoing peace process new impetus.

49. He took note of the recommendations of the Special Committee, including those relating to the formulation of a programme of work covering, in the specific case of each Non-Self-Governing Territory, the holding of regional seminars to collect and disseminate information on the Committee's deliberations and to facilitate the participation of the Territories' inhabitants in those seminars, and the strengthening of visiting missions to Non-Self-Governing Territories.

50. **Mr. Benmouna** (Morocco) observed that the regional conflict over the Sahara involved two neighbouring countries, Morocco and Algeria, which had nonetheless forged bonds of fraternity over time. It was precisely that great human and cultural closeness that had led Morocco to mobilize its forces in support of the Algerian National Liberation Front. Sadly for the Maghreb, Algeria, carried away by its ideological enthusiasms of the time, had opted for conquest of regional hegemony instead of determinedly engaging in the work of building of a united and cohesive Maghreb. It was in that context that Algeria had chosen to impede the peace process on which Morocco had embarked in order to achieve its territorial integrity. The urge to play a predominant role in the region at any price had led Algeria to propose to Mr. Baker, in 2001 in Houston, Texas, the partition of the territory of the Sahara, which was surprising from a country that had long set itself up as a champion of self-determination. The partition proposal had evidently

been designed to defeat the framework agreement proposed by Mr. Baker in 2001 and recommended in Security Council resolution 1359 (2001) as a basis for negotiation. In return for his efforts to broker a negotiated and mutually acceptable settlement of the Sahara dispute, the Secretary-General had been accused by the representative of Algeria of displaying an unacceptable lack of seriousness.

51. Algeria claimed to be defending a principle of the United Nations, but the sad irony was that the so-called defence of that principle had plunged the entire Maghreb, for three decades, into paralysis and blocked all efforts to build the Maghreb Union and establish dialogue with the European Union. And yet, encouraged by many neighbouring countries, Morocco had spared no effort to improve its relations with Algeria, thus opening up an avenue for the revitalization of the Maghreb. The Moroccan delegation was convinced that the improvement of bilateral relations would eventually promote the settlement of all the disputes, including the dispute over the Sahara, which Algeria had set as a prerequisite for the development of bilateral relations.

52. However, there were encouraging elements. Peace had been maintained, thanks to the action of the United Nations, and a process had been seriously set in motion by the Security Council for seeking a negotiated and mutually acceptable political solution of the conflict.

53. Invited to continue the task of political mediation with the parties and neighbouring States, Mr. Alvaro de Soto, who had succeeded Mr. Baker as Special Representative of the Secretary-General, had entered into consultations in the region in order to assess the situation and lay the groundwork for genuine negotiation between the parties concerned. King Mohammed VI had reiterated Morocco's position and its commitment to participate in negotiation under United Nations auspices in order to find a mutually acceptable political solution.

54. In seeking to ignore the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Algeria was assuming the weighty responsibility of blocking the process of the quest for a political solution, just as it had closed the door on the construction of the Maghreb. It was incredible that a country that claimed to be observing a political settlement process should have decided to boycott the Special Representative's efforts and impose its position on the international community.

55. The facts of the dispute were now clearly established and the positions duly recorded at the United Nations. It was thus of no avail to increase tension through useless pressures in the form of desperate, illegal acts such as recognition of a puppet authority, an act that discredited only those who committed it or subscribed to it. The time had come to put an end to that dangerous game, the only result of which thus far had been to divide the African continent and weaken it at a time when it needed to be absolutely united in order to address the challenges of globalization and underdevelopment. It was now time to regroup. Africa must, as Europe had done after the fall of the Berlin Wall, turn existing differences into factors of rapprochement and mutual enrichment, not into a source of wars and conflicts.

56. Morocco was ready to enter that debate with Algeria in order to prevent conflagration in the region and to build cooperation in which the Sahara would serve as a secure link between the north and south of the continent. Indeed, new threats and dangers lurked in the area, which had become a refuge for many terrorist and criminal tendencies.

57. It was to be hoped that Algeria would be able to abandon its former attitudes and accept the offer made to it to build a future of peace and prosperity for the Maghreb and contribute to the progress of the African continent and cooperation with the other regions of the world, in the interests of a more equitable and more rational globalization.

58. Morocco was ready to respond positively to the Secretary-General's appeal to the parties and to neighbouring States to collaborate with the United Nations in order to hasten the achievement of a political solution to the dispute over the Sahara. It would play an active role in the negotiation of a final political solution that was mutually acceptable to all parties concerned. For the time being, it would merely bear in mind the developments of 2003, in order to afford every opportunity for the promotion by the Secretary-General of future negotiations for peace in the Maghreb and renewed concord in the region.

59. **Mr. Baali** (Algeria), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the statement by the representative of Morocco was tragicomic. That representative had unsuccessfully tried to convince the

Committee by stating that Morocco was cooperating with the United Nations to solve a problem created by Algeria and by insinuating that Morocco was the victim of a conspiracy. It was illegally occupying a territory that was on the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories of the Special Committee on Decolonization. No international organization or country had ever recognized its sovereignty over Western Sahara. It was difficult to see how Morocco could claim to be cooperating with the United Nations when it had accepted, then rejected, the Settlement Plan and the referendum on self-determination.

60. Moreover, Morocco maintained that Western Sahara belonged to it and that the Saharan people wished to be Moroccan. In fact, the Government feared the results of a referendum, even one open to the Moroccans resident in Western Sahara, who outnumbered the Saharan people two to one. The suffering of the Saharans in the refugee camps resulted from Morocco's invasion of their territory. That country was wrong to occupy a territory that did not belong to it and had lost all credibility by engaging in unscrupulous ploys to delay the referendum. If it was ready to settle the dispute over Western Sahara, it should accept the Peace Plan drawn up by the former Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, James A. Baker III, and supported by the Security Council in its resolution 1495 (2003).

61. **Mr. Bennouna** (Morocco), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, reiterated that Algeria was a party to the dispute, as evidenced by the fact that its Permanent Representative was present. The Algerian delegation was indulging in appalling generalizations and misrepresenting the documents on the issue. Morocco was not afraid of a referendum procedure; it had no need for recognition of its sovereignty over the Sahara, because it was acting within its rights, in the same way that Algeria had no need for anyone to recognize its sovereignty over Kabylia. The dispute had been artificially created by Algeria, which should fulfil its responsibilities and settle it peacefully.

62. **Mr. Baali** (Algeria), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that, since the Moroccan delegation was flustered, he did not wish to increase its confusion.

63. **Mr. Bennouna** (Morocco), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, noted that the Algerian delegation had exhausted its arguments, whereas the Moroccan delegation had stated its position with the requisite calm.

64. **The Chairman** said that the Committee had concluded the general debate on decolonization.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.

United Nations A/C.4/59/SR.7

General Assembly
Fifty-ninth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
2 December 2004
English
Original: Russian

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 7th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 11 October 2004, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Kyaw Tint Swe ..... (Myanmar)

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Agenda item 74: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

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04-54409 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 74: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (A/59/20)

1. **The Chairman** commented that, over the past year, some countries had indicated their intention of resuming manned exploratory flights to the Moon, impressive coloured images of Mars had been received from two United States space missions to that planet and the spacecraft of the European Space Agency (ESA) had confirmed the presence of water ice at the south polar cap of Mars.

2. The current year marked the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and other Celestial Bodies. The United Nations had played a central role in establishing the international legal regime governing activities in outer space. United Nations treaties on outer space emphasized that such activities must benefit humanity and that it was essential to expand international cooperation in that sphere.

3. The peaceful use of outer space could significantly promote the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the decisions adopted at two World Summits: on sustainable development and on the information society. Examples of the benefits that humanity could derive from the application of space technology included remote sensing of the Earth for development needs, the inclusion of remote regions in the education system by means of tele-education employing space-based communications, telemedicine, and the forecasting of natural disasters and disaster relief.

4. The United Nations, through the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, played a pivotal role in broadening international cooperation in order that the fruits of activities in outer space reached people all over the world. Thirty-seven States representing all the continents were currently participating in the COSPAS-SARSAT International Satellite Search and Rescue System (SASR), thanks to which more than 17,000 victims of almost 5,000 accidents had been saved since 1982. More than 50 States, the European Commission and almost 30 international organizations were taking part in the work of the Group on Earth Observations, which was in the process of devising systems to permit the continuous monitoring of the state of the planet and enhance prediction of the Earth system.

5. **Mr. Abiodun** (Nigeria), Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, said that that Committee served as a multilateral forum for the exchange of ideas and for the taking of decisions that shaped the policies of countries and international organizations engaged in space-related activities. In the decision-making process, the Committee successfully adhered to the principle of consensus and, largely thanks to that principle, it counted among its accomplishments five international treaties and five sets of legal principles.

6. In addition, the Committee had been instrumental in organizing three conferences on outer space, the most recent of which, the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), which had been held in 1999, had seen the adoption of the document entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development". That document set out measures for employing space technology to solve some of the most vital development issues: the protection of the Earth's environment, support for disaster management, the correct management of the Earth's natural resources, the promotion of global health and education, the protection of the space environment and the strengthening and repositioning of space activities in the United Nations system.

7. In resolution 58/90 of 9 December 2003, the General Assembly had requested the Committee to submit its report on the review of the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III. That report was contained in document A/59/174 and the review itself would be considered by the Assembly in plenary meeting on 20 December. In that connection, the Office for Outer Space Affairs had organized an exhibition at United Nations Headquarters.

8. Introducing the Committee's annual report (A/59/20), he said that, under a three-year work plan, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had begun to consider the issue of space-system-based telemedicine and it intended to prepare bilateral and multilateral projects to further the development of the appropriate applications, especially in developing countries. The Subcommittee had also considered the pace of work on the implementation of an integrated space-based global natural disaster management

system, the urgent necessity for which had been demonstrated, in particular, by the devastating consequences of hurricanes "Ivan" and "Jeanne". Starting in 2005, the Subcommittee would be including the question of space-system-based disaster management support in a multi-year work plan. In 2004, the Subcommittee had established a working group to consider comments from Member States on the proposals regarding space debris mitigation put forward by the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee. Further progress had been made on the drafts of documents A/AC.105/L.253 and L.254 concerning nuclear power source applications in outer space. In addition, the Subcommittee had proposed the inclusion of two new items in its agenda: "Near-Earth objects", to be considered under a three-year work plan and "Support to proclaim the year 2007 International Geophysical and Heliophysical Year".

9. The Legal Subcommittee had made appreciable progress in work on the question of the status and application of the five United Nations treaties on outer space. In particular, the Working Group concerned had agreed on the text of a draft General Assembly resolution on the application of the concept of the "launching State". The Subcommittee had made further headway with the examination of the preliminary draft protocol on matters specific to space assets to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment. In that context, in keeping with General Assembly resolution 58/89 of 9 December 2003, the Subcommittee had considered the possibility of the United Nations serving as supervisory authority under the preliminary draft protocol and the relationship between the terms of that draft protocol and the rights and obligations of States under the legal regime applicable to outer space. The Subcommittee had likewise set up a working group to consider matters related to the definition and delimitation of outer space. Furthermore, the Subcommittee had begun to discuss a new agenda item on the practice of States and international organizations in registering space objects and at its forty-fourth session it would be establishing a working group on the subject.

10. Having reviewed the achievements stemming from the use of spin-off benefits from space technology, the Committee had agreed that the exploitation of such spin-offs should be encouraged, since they stimulated economic growth through the creation of new and innovative technologies and helped to raise the standard of living. Space and education had formed the focus of the debate on space and society, at which a number of reports from regional centres of space science and technology had been heard.

11. Under the item on space and water, which had been included on the Committee's agenda for the first time, it had been noted that space technology could contribute to improved water-resource management and that space data significantly promoted international cooperation in the development and rational use of water resources.

12. In response to the interest shown by Member States in the application of space technology to archaeology, the Committee had decided to hold a symposium on that subject at its next session.

13. The Committee had decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Thailand should become members of the Committee and it had also agreed that every regional group must positively encourage Committee members which were also members of the respective regional group to participate in the Committee's work and that of its subsidiary organs. It had also decided that the members of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities should be alerted to the issue of greater participation by the entities and organs in the United Nations system in the work of the Committee and its two Subcommittees.

14. In 2004, as in the previous five years, the Committee had been extremely active and it was prepared to pursue its endeavours to make it possible to use space technologies and their benefits on Earth.

15. **Mr. Maleki** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, despite the establishment of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications in 1971, the gap between developing and developed countries was still widening and many countries did not have the human, technical and financial resources needed for space-related activities even in such key areas as meteorology, communications and natural-resource management.

16. Since the establishment of the Iranian Space Agency in 2003, his country had played an active role in enhancing regional and international cooperation. In May 2004, an international seminar on the use of space technology for environmental safety, disaster

rehabilitation and sustainable development had been held in Teheran and an international seminar on satellite technology applications in communications and remote sensing, organized by the Iranian Space Agency together with the Inter-Islamic Network on Space Sciences and Technology (ISNET), was currently taking place in Teheran. Another salient example was the active participation of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the realization of the Asia-Pacific project to build a small, multi-mission satellite.

17. His country strongly supported the Committee's active involvement in the international quest for optimum scientific and technical solutions to water-resource problems, especially those such as water management in arid and semi-arid regions, monitoring the pollution of water resources, monitoring wetland environments, the mitigation of the effects of extreme water-related events and the scientific understanding of the natural water cycle.

18. Space technology also played an important role in reducing the danger of natural disasters. His country strongly supported the proposal to set up an ad hoc expert group within the framework of the Committee to study the prevention of disasters and the alleviation of their consequences. It was itself prepared to participate actively in that initiative and it urged Member States, through the Office for Outer Space Affairs, to make financial contributions to the support of that group before the end of the year, so that they could be taken into account in the estimated expenditure of the Trust Fund in 2005.

19. **Mr. Tiendrebeogo** (Burkina Faso) commended the action taken by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) in the interests of all humanity and the skill of its Chairman. All countries were interested in the results of those activities and narrow political aims had been replaced by a desire to cooperate and to share legal, scientific and technical knowledge in the sphere in question. His country hoped that that desire would become a reality so that achievements could be consolidated.

20. The developing countries, including those which were not in a position to establish their own space programmes, would always demand that outer space should be used for peaceful purposes for the benefit of all humanity and, in that connection, he underscored the relevance of the fundamental principles of international United Nations treaties and the need to apply them in good faith. The developing countries were particularly attached to regional and international cooperation in that sphere, the importance of which was fully recognized by his country and other West African States.

21. Given the real difficulties experienced by many developing countries which were members of COPUOS to take part regularly in its work, he supported the Committee's decision to study possible ways of enhancing its members' participation.

22. **Mr. Kazykhanov** (Kazakhstan) said that the use of outer space and the active application of space technology for peaceful purposes had had an increasingly positive effect on the overall social and economic progress of many States. Since his country had space facilities in its territory, it was making a major contribution to international space activities and it supported the efforts of the United Nations to further develop international cooperation in that field. His Government had adopted a State programme for the development of space activities in the Republic of Kazakhstan between 2005 and 2007, which laid the foundation for the production of domestic spacecraft. There were plans to build and launch a national geostationary communications and broadcasting satellite, KAZSAT.

23. Kazakhstan was committed to the principle that outer space must be used only for peaceful purposes and participated in a number of international space projects, including projects involving the use of space science and technology to protect the environment.

24. Kazakhstan was an active participant in the Commonwealth of Independent States Interstate Council for space research and use. It had signed an agreement with the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Belarus regarding cooperation in space matters, the primary aim being to combine their efforts to exploit the unique infrastructure of the Baikonur launching site for peaceful purposes. The signatories to the agreement had decided in September 2004 to develop a manned space shuttle "Clipper Zenit".

25. His country believed that environmental protection should be one of the most important areas of international cooperation requiring the application of the achievements of modern space science and technology. For Kazakhstan, which had experienced the reality of a global environmental disaster in the form of the drying-up of the Aral Sea, the possibility of

the use of space science and technology to monitor the environment of the Aral Sea region was of great importance. Although that situation had global dimensions, the international community was not fully aware of the grave ramifications, and the population of that long-suffering region had received only sporadic technical and financial assistance.

26. Another serious social and economic problem for Kazakhstan was the former nuclear testing ground at Semipalatinsk, where some 500 nuclear-weapon tests had been conducted during the global arms race. While Kazakhstan was grateful to the Governments of Japan, the United States of America and other donors for their attention to that pressing problem, it considered that multilateral cooperation could be more effective. The basis for such cooperation was the General Assembly resolution, the potential of which had not been fully used.

27. The issues raised in the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) — remote sensing, environmental monitoring and the use of nuclear power sources in space — were extremely topical. His delegation endorsed the Committee's conclusion regarding the importance of active international cooperation in the use of remote sensing of the earth by satellite, in particular through the exchange of experience and technology, and it appreciated the Committee's contribution to the expansion of the peaceful uses of outer space and the development of space law. The Committee should maintain its leading role in that area.

28. In order to further its integration into international space-related activities, Kazakhstan had ratified a series of international treaties and agreements relating to the exploration and use of outer space.

29. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that the review of progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) would give a new impetus to international cooperation in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space.

30. **Mr. Qi** Dahai (China) said that, with the steady increase in space activities and the rapid development of space technology, the risk of the militarization of outer space loomed larger. That flew in the face of the principle of the peaceful exploration and use of outer space and would have serious consequences. He called on the international community to intensify efforts to prevent the weaponization of outer space, inter alia, by exploring ways and means of establishing a comprehensive and effective legal mechanism to that end.

31. The draft resolution adopted by COPUOS on the application of the concept of the "launching State" would help countries to observe and apply applicable space treaties in their space activities and would be conducive to the study of practices in on-orbit transfer of ownership of space objects.

32. His Government was closely following the progress in the negotiations on the draft protocol on matters specific to space assets to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment. It welcomed the establishment by the Legal Subcommittee of an open-ended intersessional working group to prepare a report and a draft resolution for consideration by the Subcommittee at its next session, and wished to become a member of that working group. As to the relationship between the draft protocol and the rights and obligations under the legal regime applicable to outer space, he said his delegation believed that for the financing mechanisms set forth in the protocol to play an active role in promoting space activities, the protocol should clearly and explicitly provide that it would not prejudice the rights and obligations of countries under space treaties.

33. His Government attached great importance to the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) and had actively participated in the relevant action teams. His delegation would make a comprehensive presentation regarding China's activities to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III when the plenary Assembly took up agenda item 23.

34. In October 2003, China had successfully launched a manned spacecraft, and in May 2004, China's first astronaut, Mr. Yang Liwei, had handed back to the Secretary-General the United Nations flag which he had taken with him on his space voyage. China had also successfully launched Experiment Satellite 1, Nano-Satellite 1, the second satellite in the Double Star project jointly developed by China's National Space Administration and the European Space Agency, the twenty-first and twenty-second

recoverable satellites and the scientific experiment satellite SJ-6.

35. The twelfth United Nations/European Space Agency workshop on basic space science had been held in Beijing in May 2004 and had been attended by about 100 participants from 29 countries. In 2004, in cooperation with the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Chinese Government had hosted the ASEAN training course on remote sensing and the training course on space project management in the Asia and Pacific region.

36. His delegation wished to reiterate China's readiness to promote and intensify international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space on the basis of equality and mutual benefit, so that space science and technology and their applications would benefit more countries, especially the developing countries.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.

United Nations A/C.4/59/SR.8

General Assembly
Fifty-ninth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
11 November 2004
English
Original: Russian

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 8th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 12 October 2004, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Swe ..... (Myanmar)
later: Mr. Carl (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Austria)

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04-54674 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Agenda item 79: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations (*continued*) (A/59/23, chap. XII, sect. A)

1. **The Chairman** said that the Secretariat had informed him that the draft resolutions and decisions under the agenda items currently being considered had no financial implications.

Draft resolution I (A/59/23, para. 176)

2. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

None.

Abstaining:

Israel, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

3. *Draft resolution I was adopted by 128 votes to none, with 3 abstentions.*

4. **Mr. Pisa** (United Kingdom) said that, as it had done in previous years, his country had abstained in the vote on the draft resolution. It did not reject the main goal of the draft resolution and would continue to meet its obligations fully in matters concerning its overseas Territories. However, the final decision on whether a Non-Self-Governing Territory had attained a sufficient level of self-government to be able to release the administering Power from the obligation to transmit information under Article 73 *e* of the Charter fell to the Government of the relevant Territory and the administering Power, and not the General Assembly.

5. **The Chairman** said that the Committee had concluded its consideration of agenda item 79.

Agenda item 80: Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*) (A/59/23, chap. XII, sect. B)

Draft resolution II (A/59/23, para. 177)

6. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Finland, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg,

Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, United States of America.

Abstaining:

France, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

7. *Draft resolution II was adopted by 128 votes to 2, with 2 abstentions.*

8. **Mr. Estremé** (Argentina) said that the resolution that had just been adopted must be implemented in accordance with General Assembly resolutions on decolonization, particularly resolution 2065 (XX) of 16 December 1965 and resolution 31/49 of 1 December 1976 on the question of the Malvinas Islands.

9. **The Chairman** said that the Committee had concluded its consideration of agenda item 80.

Agenda item 81: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (*continued*) (A/59/23, chap. XII, sect. C)

Draft resolution III (A/59/23, para. 178)

10. **The Chairman** said that in paragraph 20 of the draft resolution the words "fifty-ninth session" should instead read "sixtieth session".

11. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Djibouti, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

None.

Abstaining:

Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

12. *Draft resolution III, as orally revised, was adopted by 84 votes to none, with 47 abstentions.*

13. **Mr. Gertz** (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union reiterated its support for the efforts of the specialized agencies to provide humanitarian, technical and educational assistance to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. However, strict compliance with the mandates of those agencies must be ensured. The

States members of the European Union had therefore abstained in the vote on the draft resolution.

14. **The Chairman** said that the Committee had concluded its consideration of agenda item 81.

Agenda item 82: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*) (A/C.4/59/L.5)

Draft resolution A/C.4/59/L.5

15. **The Chairman** said that the delegations of Ghana, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

16. *Draft resolution A/C.4/59/L.5 was adopted.*

17. **The Chairman** said that the Committee had concluded its consideration of agenda item 82.

Agenda item 20: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Territories not covered under other agenda items) (*continued*) (A/59/23, chap. XII, sects. D-G; A/C.4/59/L.2-4 and L.6)

Draft resolution on the question of Western Sahara (A/C.4/59/L.4)

18. **Mr. Ononye** (Nigeria), introducing the draft resolution, said that the sponsors, now 43 in number, had sought to avoid controversial wording. The text was therefore based on that of the previous year's resolution (General Assembly resolution 58/109 of 9 December 2003). The changes that had been made were intended to reflect events that had occurred over the past year: the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 1541 (2004) of 29 April 2004 and the resignation of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

19. **Mr. Gerts** (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union and supported by **Ms. Grant** (Canada), **Mr. Sow** (Senegal) and **Mr. Rudakov** (Russian Federation), requested that, in the interests of reaching a consensus, a decision on the draft resolution should be postponed for 48 hours.

20. **Mr. Baali** (Algeria) said that he had no objection to the request, although, in his delegation's view, the text deserved unanimous support even as it stood.

21. **Mr. Bennouna** (Morocco) welcomed the desire to achieve a consensus. The aim was not to gather votes but to reach a peaceful and mutually acceptable settlement of the fraternal dispute between two neighbouring countries in the Maghreb. The draft resolution should, however, reflect the contents of the last two paragraphs — the second of which he read out — appearing under the heading "Western Sahara" in the introduction to the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/59/2, pp. 7-8).

22. **Mr. Baali** (Algeria), speaking on a point of order, said that the discussion concerned not the substance of the issue but only a request that the decision on the draft resolution should be postponed.

23. **Mr. Ononye** (Nigeria) said that he had no objection to a postponement.

24. **Mr. Vankham** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) noted that, contrary to the information given by the representative of Nigeria, his delegation was not a sponsor of the draft resolution.

25. **The Chairman** suggested that the decision on the adoption of the draft resolution should be postponed for 48 hours.

26. *It was so decided.*

Draft decision on the question of Gibraltar (A/C.4/59/L.6)

27. **The Chairman** noted that the draft decision had been distributed only that morning. He suggested, however, that the 48-hour rule should be waived and that action should be taken on it immediately.

28. *It was so decided.*

29. *Draft decision A/C.4/59/L.6 was adopted.*

Draft resolution IV on the question of New Caledonia (A/59/23, para. 179)

30. **The Chairman** suggested that, in accordance with a request by **Mr. Gerts** (Netherlands), on behalf of the European Union, the decision on the draft resolution should be postponed for 48 hours in the interests of achieving a consensus.

31. *It was so decided.*

Draft resolution V on the question of Tokelau (A/59/23, para. 180)

32. *Draft resolution V was adopted.*

Draft resolution VI on the questions of American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Pitcairn, Saint Helena, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands (A/59/23, chap. XII, para. 181)

33. *Draft resolution VI was adopted.*

34. **Mr. Oyarzún** (Spain) said that his delegation had joined in the consensus on draft resolution VI and supported the principle of self-determination in relation to the Territories named in that resolution. At the same time, it believed that the principle of self-determination was not the only principle that could be applied to the decolonization process of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In relation to some Territories, including Gibraltar, the principle of territorial integrity should apply, in accordance with the doctrine laid down in various resolutions of the General Assembly.

35. **Mr. Estremé** (Argentina) said that, as envisaged in the plan of action for the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, regional seminars on decolonization were held only in the Caribbean and the Pacific regions and at United Nations Headquarters. The phrase "and other venues" in the twentieth preambular paragraph of section A of draft resolution VI was therefore inconsistent with the plan of action.

36. With regard to paragraph 2 of that section, his Government affirmed its full support for the right of peoples to self-determination in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960 and 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970. At the same time, it should be clear that the reference to the principle of self-determination in that paragraph related only to the Territories named in the draft resolution. Both the General Assembly and the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples recognized that there were Territories to which the principle did not apply, since there was a dispute over sovereignty. For example, in the special colonial situation in the Malvinas, the principle of territorial integrity should apply, so as not to permit attempts to destroy the national unity of Argentina. That accorded with General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 2065 (XX), as well as subsequent resolutions on the question adopted by the General Assembly and the Special Committee.

37. **Mr. Pisa** (United Kingdom) said that, as in previous years, his delegation had joined the consensus on the draft resolution. That reflected its full support for the right of peoples to self-determination as laid down in Article 1, paragraph 2, of the Charter and in paragraph 4 of the Millennium Declaration of the United Nations.

Draft resolution VII on the dissemination on information on decolonization (A/59/23, para. 182)

38. *A recorded voted was taken.*

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Finland, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic

of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining:

France.

39. *The draft resolution was adopted by 136 votes to 3, with 1 abstention.*

Draft decision on the increase in the membership of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (A/C.4/59/L.2)

40. **The Chairman** suggested that consideration of the draft decision should be postponed until the revised text was issued.

41. *It was so decided.*

Draft resolution on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (A/C.4/59/L.3)

42. **The Chairman** said that the Russian Federation was not a sponsor of the draft resolution.

43. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Finland, Gabon, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Belgium, France, Georgia, Germany, Israel.

44. *The draft resolution was adopted by 133 votes to 2, with 5 abstentions.*

Agenda item 74: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*) (A/59/20)

45. **Mr. Basu** (India) said that his delegation welcomed the progress achieved by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) at its forty-seventh session, including the smooth transition to the rotation of all five Bureau posts among the five established regional groups and the recommendation that the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Thailand should become members of the Committee.

46. His delegation noted with appreciation the activities covered by the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, despite the budgetary constraints, in particular on such priority themes of importance to the developing countries as disaster management, sustainable development and capacity-building. The work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, particularly involving the space debris mitigation guidelines, deserved full support.

47. The Indian space programme was applications-oriented because its purpose continued to be to develop and utilize space technology for national development. India kept the Member States informed of the outcome of its scientific research through the Scientific and

Technical Subcommittee. Recognizing the importance of new areas such as disaster management, tele-education, telemedicine and remote sensing satellites and acting in the interests of all, particularly the developing countries, India had been instrumental in securing the adoption by consensus of decisions to include those matters as agenda items in the period following the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III).

48. With respect to the Legal Subcommittee, he noted with satisfaction that agreement had been reached to recommend to the General Assembly for adoption a draft resolution on the application of the concept of the "launching State". India attached importance to the subject of making the United Nations the supervisory authority for the future protocol on space assets to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment, not only because that would provide a means of supporting private legal initiatives in outer space but also because it would set a precedent for United Nations involvement in non-governmental private initiatives, and it considered that the initiative deserved careful consideration.

49. The main achievements of the Indian space programme included the launch on 17 October 2003 of a remote sensing satellite Resourcesat-I which had been launched into a highly accurate polar sun-synchronous orbit by the Indian launch vehicle PSLV. On 20 September 2004, with a view to improving educational infrastructure, a communications satellite named "EDUSAT" had been launched which would provide national and regional footprint coverage in extended C and Ku frequency bands. India had set up a project for the creation of a satellite and fibre optic communications network for all the 53 nations of the African Union the installation, initial operation and maintenance costs of which would amount to some $50 million over three years.

50. In addition to the Seventh Global Spatial Data Infrastructure Conference held in Bangalore, in which 400 delegates from 36 countries had taken part, an India-United States conference on space science applications and commerce had met in June 2004, also in Bangalore, which had provided further impetus for increased collaboration in space technology with the United States. Bilateral and multilateral cooperation activities had also continued with other space-faring countries such as the Russian Federation and France, as well as with developing countries. The Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific in Dehradun had also made considerable progress, providing specialist, post-graduation and short-term courses for scholars from 44 countries. In conclusion he said that effective implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III would further enhance international cooperation in space.

51. **Mr. Londoño** (Colombia) said that his delegation was pleased that the efforts of the Member States to implement the Space Millennium Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development, adopted by UNISPACE III, had been successful and supported the outcome of the review of the recommendations of that Conference which had been incorporated in the "UNISPACE III + 5" process.

52. Colombia attached great importance to the application of space science and technology for the prevention of natural disasters, tele-education, telemedicine and remote sensing. For that reason his Government had hosted the Fourth Space Conference of the Americas, held in Cartagena de Indias from 14 to 17 May 2002, which had adopted the Declaration of Cartagena de Indias and the Plan of Action. Both those instruments were currently being implemented in cooperation with the United Nations and the space agencies.

53. The recommendations of "UNISPACE III + 5" were the outcome of joint efforts to give effect to the wishes of the developing countries and to ensure the contribution of all States in the peaceful uses of outer space.

54. In conclusion he said that the Government of Ecuador was in favour of holding the next Space Conference of the Americas in 2006 in Ecuador.

55. *Mr. Carl (Austria), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

56. **Mr. Fallouh** (Syrian Arab Republic) expressed his delegation's satisfaction concerning the activities of COPUOS in implementing the recommendations of UNISPACE III. His country had noted with interest the work of the Legal Subcommittee, in particular on the status and application of the five United Nations treaties on outer space and the definition and delimitation of outer space, and the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, particularly

concerning the overall strategy for the implementation of the United Nations programme for the benefit of the developing countries.

57. Rapid qualitative and quantitative changes were currently taking place in the means and procedures of research and the exploitation of the results of the utilization of outer space for peaceful purposes. His country welcomed the efforts being made at the international level to use outer space in order to address problems of an economic and humanitarian nature, particularly in the interests of the developing countries.

58. The utilization of outer space for peaceful purposes required the international community to display a genuine willingness to act within a normative and legal framework in order to prevent the militarization of outer space. The Syrian Arab Republic welcomed the efforts of a number of countries to limit their expenditure on programmes for the militarization of outer space in favour of development projects. In order to achieve further progress at the national level, his country had established a committee on remote sensing and discovery.

59. In conclusion, he said that his delegation was gratified that the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya was to become a member of COPUOS and supported the idea of increasing the number of members so that it would be possible to take full advantage of the contribution of all countries.

60. **Mr. Gerts** (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the candidate countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey), the stabilization and association process countries and potential candidate countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) and the EFTA countries (Iceland and Norway), said that space technology and the use of space applications were playing an increasing role in society, becoming almost an aspect of everyday life. The peaceful use of outer space was of great interest for the benefit of humankind. Space technology could make a significant contribution towards solving the major challenges of the modern world, including controlling or even stopping climate change and reducing pressure on the environment, stimulating sustainable development, and creating acceptable living conditions for everyone on Earth. In a wider context, space science contributed to the efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, the goals of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the World Summit on the Information Society.

61. In 2005 the European Commission would organize an international conference to explore possible cooperation scenarios not only with the space Powers but also with developing countries on the development of global services such as positioning, earth observation and access to information.

62. The European Union remained a strong advocate of the concept of outer space as part of the common heritage of mankind and, in that connection, had noted with interest the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) on its forty-seventh session (A/59/20). An important issue on the agenda of COPUOS was the review of the implementation of the recommendations of the third United Nations conference on the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space (UNISPACE III). The recommendations of COPUOS, contained in document A/59/174, concerned further action to improve human living conditions and envisaged, in particular, the development of a comprehensive worldwide environment monitoring strategy, the use and application of global navigation satellite systems to support sustainable development, the use of telemedicine and the implementation of an integrated worldwide system for disaster management. The European Union appreciated the method of establishing priorities in the 33 recommendations of UNISPACE III and the establishment of 12 action teams to prepare implementation. It would make a separate statement to the General Assembly concerning the review of UNISPACE III in plenary.

63. Some subjects relating to the peaceful uses of outer space merited particular attention owing not only to their technical complexity, but also to their potential legal implications. For example, the growing number of private entities involved in space exploration and the increasing commercialization of outer space required a suitable legal framework and appropriate national space laws. Also, special attention should be paid to the increasing pollution of outer space by space debris. It could not be ignored that space debris would stand in the way of future space activities unless special measures were taken within the shortest possible time, at both the international and national levels. In that connection, the European Union appreciated the work

of the Inter-Agency Space Debris Committee on space debris mitigation guidelines.

64. In the context of legal implications, mention should be made of the draft resolution on the application of the concept of the launching State submitted for consideration by the General Assembly. The recommendations adopted by the Legal Subcommittee, based on the outcome of its work on that topic, would foster significant advances in space law and focus attention on national space legislation at a time when private space activities were on the increase.

65. Given that continued international cooperation in space science and technology was a prerequisite for progress, the European Union attached special importance to the activities of the International Space Station. European countries were also actively participating in international cooperation in the field of earth observation, as demonstrated by the European initiative "Global Monitoring for Environment and Security", which, together with the initiative proposed by the United States of America for the development of a common approach to harmonize earth observation data, was playing a significant role in improving living conditions and conserving national resources. The European Union also recognized the great importance of space technologies for navigation and determination of location and time. In addition to the existing Global Positioning System of the United States and the Russian Global Navigation Satellite System, the European Union was developing its own Galileo system.

66. In that context, he stressed the important role of the European Space Agency (ESA), which was responsible for the development of many European space research and space exploration activities within the framework of the common European strategy and was also participating in broader cooperation, for example, in the context of UNISPACE III and the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

67. Clearly, it was impossible to imagine life today without space science and technology, which were exerting an increasing influence on society and on the welfare of humankind. The European Union would make every effort to ensure the peaceful use of outer space for the benefit of life on Earth.

68. **Mr. Baloch** (Pakistan) said that his Government attached great importance to the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, which promoted the peaceful exploration of the treasures of outer space for the benefit of all humanity. Recalling that Pakistan had chaired the working group of the Committee's Scientific and Technical Subcommittee since 1990, he welcomed the development by the Subcommittee of a template for a questionnaire on the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III and the enhancement of the geographical distribution of the posts of subcommittee chairmen.

69. His Government supported all efforts to promote ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes. Militarization of outer space should be avoided at all costs. In that connection, there was a need to intensify the efforts of the international community to prevent the weaponization of outer space, including the exploration of ways of establishing a comprehensive and effective legal mechanism for that purpose. His delegation believed that that issue fell well within the terms of reference of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

70. He recalled that the General Assembly had adopted Principles relating to Remote Sensing of the Earth from Outer Space. Those Principles served as guidelines for remote sensing and prevented the use of remote sensing techniques in a manner detrimental to other countries' interests. His Government supported the incorporation of the Principles in a more binding legal instrument. There was also a need to give developing countries low-cost access to remote sensing data, which could have a wide range of useful applications.

71. His Government attached great importance to the efforts of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in support of disaster mitigation and management. The national space agency of Pakistan SUPARCO had been operating the Pakistan Mission Control Centre since 1991, as well as the Pakistan local user terminal of the International Satellite System for Search and Rescue, which was a ground services provider for disaster management support. His Government hoped that new technologies would allow the use of outer space to establish communication infrastructure for early warning systems, which could mitigate the effects of natural disasters.

72. His Government believed that greater efforts were needed to ensure that the benefits of space

science and technology could be used by all countries, including the dissemination of satellite data and the provision of training assistance and capacity-building. In that connection, he stressed the need to increase voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund for the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. The Fund's resources were needed for long- and short-term training for developing countries and for the implementation of the previous recommendations of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in that regard.

73. Lastly, he reaffirmed his Government's commitment to the effective implementation of the Vienna Declaration so as to promote cooperation in space science and technology and the sharing of the benefits of peaceful space research without any discrimination.

74. **Mr. Lichem** (Austria) said that his delegation fully aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union. He expressed deep appreciation to the leadership of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space for its serious and multidimensional efforts in many fields, undertaken in a spirit of initiative, cooperation and coordination. He also welcomed the new level of coordination between the chairmen of the Committee and its subcommittees and the outstanding work of the Office for Outer Space Affairs in accomplishing the tasks entrusted to it despite its limited resources.

75. The agenda of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had undergone an interesting evolution, which to some extent reflected the developments in the agendas of other organizations and in other fields of work. An important turning point in that regard had been the holding of UNISPACE III as far back as 1999; subsequently, the World Summit on Sustainable Development had produced more concrete recommendations for action.

76. Practically all countries had an interest in the development and application of space technology for sustainable development. The field of water resources management was a clear illustration of that point. Taking into account the scarcity of water resources and its impact on human security, there was a need to develop a new integrated, multi-purpose approach and new forms of cooperation among States using the same water resources systems. Water resources management, which was currently characterized by the scarcity of both water and data, would be much more effective with the application of data obtained from space technology. He welcomed the decision of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the General Assembly to put the use of space technology for water resources management on the Organization's agenda and cited as significant examples of cooperation in that field the workshop in Rabat, organized by ESA and the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites in cooperation with the Moroccan Royal Centre for Remote Sensing; the International Conference on Space and Water: Towards Sustainable Development and Human Security, held in Santiago for the countries of the Latin American region; and the traditional Graz symposium, organized by the Austrian Government, ESA and the United Nations.

77. The framework established at the symposium would facilitate the next step, namely, the selection of a concrete pilot project area and the implementation in Africa of a space technology application project for rational water resources management, which would be a giant leap for humankind in the peaceful use of outer space for development.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.

United Nations A/C.4/59/SR.9

General Assembly
Fifty-ninth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
14 December 2004
English
Original: Russian

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 9th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 13 October 2004, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Carl (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Austria)

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Agenda item 74: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*)

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04-54973 (E)

In the absence of Mr. Swe (Myanmar), Mr. Carl (Austria), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Agenda item 74: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*) (A/59/20)

1. **Mr. Hodgkins** (United States of America), noting the contribution made by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) to promoting international space cooperation, said that the flexible approach that used multi-year work plans, action teams and reports by other groups on their activities had proved to be an effective means of implementing the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) and allowed for work on a wide range of topics.

2. The United States of America was pleased with the progress made by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee in preparing the report to the General Assembly on activities related to implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III and the successful work of the Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space in identifying potential implementation options for establishing an international framework for the safety of planned space nuclear power source applications. Progress had also been made by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on space-system-based telemedicine.

3. International cooperation in solar-terrestrial physics was vitally important. As the effects of solar activities and space weather phenomena on the daily lives of people, the environment and space systems were becoming more apparent, collaboration was needed to reach a better understanding of those consequences. In that regard, the United States of America noted with satisfaction that the Subcommittee had agreed to consider the item again at its 2005 session and examine the issue of how it might support and enhance the coordination and planning for the International Geophysical and Heliophysical Year that would be marked in 2007.

4. His delegation regretted that the Subcommittee had been unable to reach consensus during the current year on the Inter-Agency Debris Coordination Committee (IADC) space debris mitigation guidelines. His Government continued to believe that the fastest way to limit the growth of orbital debris would be for space-faring countries to implement the measures specified in that Committee's space debris mitigation guidelines.

5. Progress had also been made within the Legal Subcommittee on a range of topics. In particular, the Subcommittee had considered developments relating to a possible protocol on matters specific to space assets to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment of the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law. His Government believed that such a protocol would facilitate the provision of commercial financing for space activities.

6. Significant progress had also been made on the question of registering space objects and on such issues as the spin-off benefits of space exploration, strengthening the role of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in efforts to promote international cooperation in the use of outer space for peaceful purposes, and space and society, with special emphasis on education.

7. **Mr. López** (Cuba) said that outer space exploration was playing a growing role in various aspects of the life of society. At present, it would be very difficult to do without the use of remote sensing and telecommunications in the areas of agriculture, education, environmental protection, natural resource management and navigation systems. Nor was it possible to forgo the microgravity experiments, which were allowing such fields as biology and fluid physics to be explored in ways not possible on Earth and constituted an important component of scientific development. The fascination with outer space had set free the imagination of millions of people and stimulated the growth of unlimited creative potential for developing new technologies. Meteorological satellite observations had helped to improve weather forecasts and to mitigate, through concerted actions, the harmful effects of natural disasters such as hurricanes. At its previous session, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had highlighted the importance of facilitating access by developing countries to satellite data at reasonable prices and using such means of communication as the Internet in the event of natural disasters.

8. Cuba reiterated that outer space must be seen as the common heritage of humanity, to be defended on the basis of three main principles that must regulate

States' activities with respect to its exploration and use. The first was the need to preserve outer space exclusively for peaceful uses, while enhancing international cooperation and promoting real sustainable economic development, including the necessary transfer of advanced space technology from the developed to the developing countries, and taking into consideration the continued gap between them in space science and technology. Cuba rejected attempts to revise the principles relating to the use of nuclear energy in outer space which did not take into consideration the interests of all States and of developing countries in particular. It was also essential to reach agreements on space debris mitigation.

9. Secondly, Cuba emphatically opposed the plans to unleash an arms race in outer space, which would seriously jeopardize collective security. The issue was becoming particularly urgent with the emergence of new military doctrines that advocated the development and deployment of new and expensive destructive weapons systems aimed at strengthening the hegemony of the most powerful over the remaining inhabitants of the planet. In that regard, his delegation was deeply concerned that some nuclear Power that also had space potential continued to block the negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament aimed at establishing international machinery for the prevention of an arms race in outer space. To that end, as a first practical step, States should establish a moratorium on deploying weapons in outer space until an agreement on the matter had been reached by the international community.

10. Thirdly, Cuba shared the view that the existing legal regime applicable to outer space was not enough to ensure the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which meant that there was an urgent need to devise new legal mechanisms for control and verification.

11. His delegation favoured the strengthening of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its two subcommittees. The interest shown by various States in working with and joining the Committee was welcome. His delegation emphasized the importance that it attached to developing strategies to minimize the consequences of the creation of space debris and the need to pay careful attention to the question of collisions of space objects, especially objects with nuclear power sources on board, as well as defining the responsibilities of the parties concerned.

12. Many of the items on the COPUOS agenda were of common interest, such as the geostationary orbit and its utilization and application in space communications, taking particular account of the needs and interests of developing countries. Lowering the costs of small satellites and microsatellites used for agriculture and health care was very important for developing countries. Solar-terrestrial physics research should continue for the benefit of the development of humanity.

13. In conclusion, in view of the great importance of strengthening international and regional cooperation to develop space research, his delegation said that such cooperation must not become the exclusive domain or purview of a small group of developed countries. The United Nations and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had much work to do to in order to make optimal use of space technologies to promote human development, strengthen environmental protection and ensure real sustainable development in a climate of peace and prosperity for all of humanity. Cuba stood ready to do all that it could to cooperate in attaining that objective.

14. Mr. Kuzmenkov (Russian Federation) called for a more active discussion on the theme "Ways and Means of Maintaining Outer Space for Peaceful Purposes" in the Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and said that the deployment of weapons in outer space seriously damaged the existing regime for the peaceful use of outer space, as well as the whole system of international security.

15. The Russian Federation believed that the codification and the progressive development of the current rules of space law were long overdue and becoming increasingly relevant given mankind's rapid development of outer space for commercial, scientific and other peaceful purposes. Attention was again called to the proposal on the drafting of a comprehensive United Nations convention on international space law. While drafting that instrument, generally acceptable outcomes could be found for such long-standing issues as the delimitation and definition of outer space, monitoring of man-made space debris and protection of intellectual property.

16. The Russian Federation intended to take an active part in the review of the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III. In the opinion of the Russian delegation, the

Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, with the help of ad hoc informal working groups, had done important work to implement the decisions of the Conference. That was reflected in particular by its adoption of the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development, although much still remained to be done on many priority issues.

17. The Russian Federation highly appreciated the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the topic of the use of nuclear power sources in outer space and the problem of space debris, and welcomed the space debris mitigation guidelines prepared by the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee. At the same time, the Russian Federation underscored the need to thoroughly take into account all the observations of States pertaining to that document. The problem of preventing man-made space debris required the solution of a broad spectrum of problems with the involvement of all concerned States. In the future the need might arise to introduce changes and clarifications in the guidelines in view of the technological complexity of this problem.

18. Progress had been made in defining the criteria and security conditions for the use of nuclear energy sources. In defining the scope of subsequent work in that area, it would be necessary to use the potential and experience of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and, in particular, to include Agency experts in the activities of the COPUOS Working Group.

19. For the purpose of environmental monitoring and providing early warning and mitigating the effects of disasters, it was necessary to develop remote sensing of the Earth from outer space and to broaden cooperation with other interested international organizations. One of the results of such cooperation could be the creation of a global disaster management system using space technology.

20. The renewed dialogue on that and many other issues pertaining to space activities was a testimony to the intense development of international cooperation regarding outer space, reflecting the interests of all States Members of the United Nations.

21. **Mr. Nguyen Van Bao** (Viet Nam), thanked the Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space for introducing the comprehensive report on the work of its forty-seventh session. Viet Nam attached great importance to the role of that Committee in promoting international cooperation in the area in question and commended the great progress achieved during the most recent session. Viet Nam also supported the decision of the Committee to recommend to the General Assembly that the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Thailand should become members of the Committee.

22. Since outer space was the common heritage of all mankind, it must be used solely for peaceful purposes. Although significant advances had been made in space technologies and in widening the scope of the peaceful use of outer space, many developing countries had no access to advanced technologies. Viet Nam therefore emphasized the need to assist developing countries wanting to acquire space technology so as to reduce the gap between poor and rich in that area and to use outer space for the benefit and in the interests of all countries.

23. Viet Nam agreed with many delegations on the need to negotiate a legally binding international treaty on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and to prohibit the deployment of weapons in outer space.

24. **Mr. Dabbashi** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) expressed appreciation for the activities of COPUOS and its Subcommittees and for the work done at its forty-seventh session.

25. All countries had come to recognize the great significance of the recent rapid development of space technologies and of their utilization to ensure sustainable development, progress and prosperity. The Center for Remote Sensing and Space Science had been established in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in 1999 and was helping to solve problems created by desertification, water shortages and similar issues. His country was currently considering joining the International Satellite System for Search and Rescue.

26. There was an urgent need for international arrangements that would allow all countries — in return for an acceptable payment — to use the results of space technology development. Such arrangements would permit the sustainable development of the developing countries and reduce the inequality between them and the developed countries. He expressed the hope that in the near future developing States would have their own projects based on space technologies, thus allowing such technologies to be transferred to the most needy of those countries, and that the international community would actively engage in the

drafting of a legally binding international treaty on the use of outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes. His country strongly urged all countries to refrain from any actions that could lead to the militarization of outer space and would thus have serious consequences for all humanity.

27. Having participated for many years as an observer in the work of COPUOS, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya was most pleased and grateful that the Committee had decided to accept it as a member. It was to be hoped that the decision would be unanimously approved by the General Assembly. His delegation would make every effort to implement the mandate of COPUOS and to strengthen international cooperation in the use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

28. **Mrs. Miller** (Jamaica) said that space technology could yield vast benefits for States, in particular those that did not have current ambitions to embark on an active space programme. That was why Jamaica supported the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, since such an approach allowed the international community, both developed and developing countries, to apply the achievements of space science and technology.

29. Jamaica had noted with interest the work being undertaken by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, particularly the activities of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. The priority areas identified for consideration — namely disaster management, satellite communications for tele-education and telemedicine applications, monitoring and protection of the environment, management of natural resources, and education and capacity-building — had enormous significance for the addressing the key social and economic concerns of developing countries. Activities related to the international satellite system for search and rescue were also of interest.

30. The Caribbean region and parts of the United States had recently suffered the devastating effects of a spate of hurricanes, and Jamaica therefore had a particular interest in the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to implement an integrated, space-based global natural disaster management system. Such a system would help to predict, mitigate and respond to natural disasters. Jamaica would welcome additional information on how such space-related technology in disaster management could be made available to and used effectively by countries in the Caribbean region.

31. She expressed concern regarding the limited financial resources available to the Programme on Space Applications and particular interest in how States that were not members of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space could participate in its activities and its work. Jamaica planned to do so by participating in relevant United Nations conferences, training courses and workshops. Two such events were scheduled to be held in the Latin American and Caribbean region in 2005. They would deal specifically with the application of space technology to natural resources management and environmental monitoring and tele-health and tele-education.

32. **Mr. Gallegos Chiriboga** (Ecuador) noted that the discussion of the question of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space at the present session of the General Assembly was taking place immediately after World Space Week, held every year from 4 to 10 October, and suggested that a tribute should be paid to all the persons and organizations engaged in various countries of the world in space-science research and the development and improvement of the legal framework for regulating activities in outer space so that the benefits of the exploration and use of outer space would help to improve people's quality of life and to ensure the prosperity and well-being of present and future generations. His delegation welcomed in that connection the statement made by the Chairman of COPUOS on 2 June 2004, in which he invited the Committee to identify new areas for the application of space technologies for sustainable development, and inter alia to identify initiatives to ensure the effective use of space capabilities to promote health and education and to strengthen decision-making in the management of natural resources, including water resources, which warranted special attention in the light of General Assembly resolution 58/217 of 23 December 2003 proclaiming the period 2005-2015 as the International Decade of Action "Water for Life".

33. His delegation had already pointed out at the present session that hunger, environmental degradation, water shortages, epidemics and epidemic and infectious diseases were having an adverse impact on the lives of millions of people, and that such

marginalization and the structural imbalance in the international system would worsen still further unless steps were taken to narrow the gulf between rich and poor and offer women and men the possibility of self-development in conditions of sufficiency, dignity and security. That was precisely why Ecuador attached such importance to the provisions of General Assembly resolution 58/89 of 9 December 2003, which called for more effective use of space technology and encouragement of the orderly growth of space activities to promote sustained economic growth and sustainable development in all countries, as well as to mitigate the consequences of natural disasters, in particular in the developing countries. His delegation therefore supported the Committee's recommendation that it should consider at its next session, as a matter of priority, ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes.

34. The countries of North and South America, including Ecuador, attached special importance to outer space and its rational, equitable and peaceful use. That was why the General Assembly had recommended in its resolution 58/89, that COPUOS, within the framework of its examination of ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes, should consider ways to promote regional and interregional cooperation based on experiences stemming from the Space Conference of the Americas. That testified to the respect won by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean through their serious, profound and forward-looking analysis of the possibilities of using outer space for the development and progressive growth of human well-being.

35. The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean had taken a decision to invest the Space Conference of the Americas with official status, and the members of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States had decided to hold the fifth Space Conference in Ecuador in 2005. That decision had been taken in the light of Ecuador's serious and responsible approach to the use of outer space and in recognition of its contribution to the development of international space law.

36. His delegation agreed with the priority areas for the work of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and was convinced that the implementation of the planned measures would deliver real benefits for the developing countries. However, the earmarked financial contributions for the Programme must be increased if its activities were to be carried out and its financial viability guaranteed.

37. His delegation endorsed the view of COPUOS on the necessity to build capacity in the use of remote sensing technology to meet the needs of the developing countries and was convinced that the application of such technology and the peaceful uses of outer space could bring enormous benefits to the poorest population groups.

38. It noted in particular the huge achievements of the People's Republic of China in the space field, in particular the launch of its manned SHENZHOU-5 spaceship in October 2003 and of a number satellites. Special attention should be paid in that connection to China's stated readiness to promote the development of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space on a basis of equality and mutual benefit in order to ensure that the achievements of space science and technology could be used by more countries, especially developing countries.

39. All aspects of the question of the geostationary orbit must receive detailed study, in view of the limited nature of the resource.

40. Ecuador agreed with the Committee's recommendation that it should continue to study the possibility of establishing, within the framework of the United Nations, an international organization for the coordination of space activities for disaster management and called on Member States to discuss the question at the forty-second session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction to be held from 18 to 22 January 2005 in Kobe, Japan.

41. In its resolution 58/89 the General Assembly had called for promotion of the exploration and use of outer space, as the province of all mankind, for peaceful purposes and had appealed to Member States to promote the attainment of the goals set out in the resolution for the benefit of present and future generations. Outer space must serve as a source of universal development and a tool for correcting the world's imbalances and inequalities.

42. **Ms. Laohaphan** (Thailand) noted that COPUOS had recommended to the General Assembly that Thailand should become a member of the Committee. Thailand supported the Committee's call for its

members to participate actively in its work and in the work of its subsidiary bodies.

43. As part of the efforts to promote the peaceful uses of outer space Thailand had conducted bilateral projects with a number of countries, including neighbouring countries, and at the regional and international levels it had been working in the ASEAN Committee on Science and Technology. In conjunction with the United Nations it had organized a workshop on the contribution of space communications technology to bridging the digital divide and had joined the ESCAP Regional Space Applications Programme. In November 2004 it was to host with the Office for Outer Space Affairs the 25th Asian Conference on Remote Sensing and the first Asian Space Conference. In addition, a workshop on tele-health and telemedicine was to be held in the Asian-Pacific region in the near future.

44. With reference to paragraph 52 of the COPUOS report, she said that international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space should be more firmly directed towards assisting the developing countries to attain the Millennium Development Goals. For example, tele-education initiatives in remote areas were in line with Development Goal 2; telemedicine, which helped to secure human well-being, supported the attainment of Goals 4, 5 and 6; and remote sensing helped to ensure the sustainable use of the environment — the purpose of Goal 7.

45. Thailand supported the initiative for the implementation, within the framework of the United Nations, of an integrated, space-based global natural disaster management system. The selection of the topic "Space and education" as the focus of the discussion in the period 2004-2005 was a step in the right direction, not least for the popularization of the work of COPUOS.

46. **Mr. Yamamoto** (Japan) noted that Japan's SERVIS-1 satellite had been successfully launched in October 2003. However, Japan had experienced a number of disappointments over the past year as a result of space-technology failures.

47. October 2003 had also seen the establishment of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, which was charged with the promotion of space activities, with emphasis on such matters as the development of satellites for Earth observation, telecommunications, broadcasting and positioning, the transfer of launch-vehicle operation to the private sector, the development of advanced-type launch vehicles to carry supplier modules to the International Space Station (ISS), the further promotion of space science in Japan, and assistance with the implementation of the ISS programme. In addition, the Agency conducted research in many different areas, from basic scientific experimentation to practical research and development.

48. In September 2004 Japan's Council for Science and Technology Policy had adopted a strategy for space development and utilization, which set out the general policy for the development and use of outer space in the next decade.

49. Japan had also been promoting international cooperation in a variety of fields, particularly Earth observation, the importance of which had been noted at the G8 summit in June 2003 and at the first Earth Observation Summit. The second Earth Observation Summit, in Japan in April 2004, had adopted a draft implementation plan. Japan provided one of the co-chairmen of the ad hoc Group on Earth Observations established at the first Summit.

50. His delegation had had great pleasure in serving as chairman of the Action Team on agenda item 17 and expressed its appreciation to the other Action Teams for the reports which they had compiled.

51. The development of outer space offered infinite possibilities for all mankind. It was essential for the benefits of space activities to be used not just by the countries engaged in such activities but by all mankind. It was to be hoped that Thailand and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, which had become full members of COPUOS, would make a positive contribution to its work.

52. **Mr. Akinyede** (Nigeria) congratulated China on the success of its first manned space mission and noted the remarkable progress made by the United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the European Space Agency (ESA) in the exploration of Mars.

53. In September 2003 Nigeria had launched its first satellite into orbit. It had been a momentous event not only for Nigeria but also for Africa as a whole, and had demonstrated that a developing country could develop and use inexpensive, flexible and dynamic remote sensing in agriculture, environmental management and other areas.

54. To evaluate and validate the data received with the help of the satellite, an international workshop had been organized in June 2004 and attended by more than 500 participants. The workshop had addressed a number of issues, including: environmental degradation in the Niger delta; the monitoring of deforestation in Nigeria; mapping/monitoring of aggressive gully erosion and land degradation in south-eastern Nigeria; assessment of the consequences of the construction of dams and the regulation of the flow of surface waters on agriculture and other socio-economic activities in northern Nigeria; water recharge for the depleted upper aquifer of the Chad Basin in Nigeria; and the potentials of the satellite "NigeriaSat-1" for geological mapping and mineral exploration in Benue Trough.

55. Following the launch of the satellite, Nigeria had taken steps to fulfil its obligations under the legal regime governing space-related activities. In October 2003 Nigeria had acceded to the Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects and the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space. It had earlier signed and ratified the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, and the Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space.

56. As a follow-up to the successful launch of the satellite, Nigeria's National Space Research and Development Agency had received government approval to launch a communications satellite which would meet the Government's aspiration fully to consolidate the gains brought by communications technology. Also, the President of Nigeria had recently approved the building and launching in 2007 of a high-resolution Earth observation satellite which would be one of the proposed African Resource and Environmental Management constellation satellites. That project was being considered as a potential project in the science and technology programme areas of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). That initiative would promote the use of accessible space observation data for tackling the complex challenges of sustainable food production, protection of the environment and disaster management in Africa.

57. Successful research was continuing at the Centre for Basic Space Sciences and the Centre for Geodesy and Geodynamics. In October 2003 the Centre for Basic Space Sciences had signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Astronomical Observatory of Japan. The Centre had also submitted a proposal to Western Kentucky University (United States of America) for the siting of a small telescope in Nigeria to support astronomy and space science research in the country.

58. The African Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education, located in Nigeria, had hosted a workshop on satellite communication in 2004, and in January 2004 had launched its second postgraduate course on satellite communication and remote sensing. The Centre had also begun the study of the energy exchange between the surface of the Earth and the atmosphere in tropical climate conditions. The goal of the study was to investigate the energy balance in a tropical agricultural field in the transition period between dry and wet seasons, using direct measurements of all components of the energy and radiation balance at the surface.

59. Nigeria considered international cooperation to be a strategic condition for rapid implementation of its space policy and programmes. In that connection, he was pleased to announce that Nigeria had become a member of the International Astronomical Union.

60. **Mr. Romeiro** (Brazil), speaking on behalf of the members of the Common Market of the Southern Cone (MERCOSUR), Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, and the associated States Bolivia, Chile and Peru, said that the COPUOS report reflected the importance they attached to the work period under review, showed the importance of issues connected with the use of outer space and pointed to the fact that space technologies had become an integral part of everyday life. It argued for the urgent need to make progress on the legal and ethical questions of the peaceful use of outer space. In order to achieve genuine development and an enhancement of well-being through the peaceful use of outer space, it was necessary to consider space as the common heritage of mankind, to be used rationally, for peaceful purposes and for the common good of present and future generations. Also, in spite of current achievements in the area of space technologies, a significant portion of the human race was still unaware of them and not reaping their benefits. Furthermore, broad strata of the

world's population had no relevant knowledge and understanding of the importance of using space technology for future stages of development.

61. The MERCOSUR and associated countries reiterated their increased interest in the work of COPUOS, had been supporting its activities from the outset and were taking an active part in its deliberations.

62. One of the priority issues for COPUOS was maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes, and in that regard it was essential to continue to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III and develop the norms of international space law, including international agreements on applications of the achievements of space science and technology for peaceful purposes. He welcomed the recognition of the need to strengthen international cooperation in securing the rational use of water resources, demonstrated by the inclusion in the agenda of the forty-seventh session of COPUOS of an item entitled "Space and water".

63. Another cause for satisfaction was the unreserved support COPUOS had expressed for the activities of the working group established to submit to the General Assembly the report on implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III, in particular concerning improvement in the use of acquired knowledge by ensuring universal access to services in the area of satellite communications and innovative sources of financing and preparation for implementing experimental projects in accordance with the proposals of the various action teams.

64. The progress made in the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee was also most interesting. In the context of implementing the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, particular attention was being given to specific areas that were of priority importance for developing countries and geared mainly to enhancing the potential of and raising the level of information available to decision-making organs in order to secure support on the ground for specific methods of using space technologies. That was particularly topical in view of the serious consequences recently suffered by the countries of the Caribbean Basin as a result of devastating hurricanes.

65. The MERCOSUR and associated countries noted with interest and satisfaction the priority areas that had been selected for the Programme, in particular satellite communications for tele-education and telemedicine applications; monitoring and protection of the environment; management of natural resources; use of global navigation and positioning satellite systems; spin-off of space technology; and promoting the participation of private industry in the activities of the Programme.

66. As for the work of the Legal Subcommittee at its forty-third session, it was necessary to underline the special importance of existing space treaties for all countries; the work of the Subcommittee in examining the activities of international organizations relating to space law was also of great significance.

67. It was necessary to build on the progress made in establishing regional mechanisms for cooperation. The most important outcome of the Fourth Space Conference of the Americas, held in Cartagena in 2002, had been the creation of a regional body for cooperation on outer space issues, which was regarded by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean as an indispensable mechanism for successful activity in that area. The Fifth Space Conference of the Americas was to be held in Quito, Ecuador.

68. It was impossible to overstate the importance of the appropriate use of outer space in the interests of the progress of all mankind, without distinctions between developed and developing countries and on the basis of peaceful cooperation within the community of nations.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.

United Nations A/C.4/59/SR.10

General Assembly
Fifty-ninth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
23 December 2004
English
Original: Russian

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 10th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 14 October 2004, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Swe ..... (Myanmar)

Contents

Agenda item 73: Effects of atomic radiation

Agenda item 20: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*continued*)

04-55291 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 73: Effects of atomic radiation (A/59/46)

1. **Mr. Yamamoto** (Japan), speaking as Chairman of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, introduced a draft resolution in which the General Assembly would endorse the Scientific Committee's mandate and encourage its activities.

2. Since its establishment in 1955, the Scientific Committee had played a vitally important role in the area of studying sources of ionizing radiation. Although its original mandate had been to assess levels and effects of ionizing radiation, it had subsequently extended its role to embrace new challenges such as radioactive waste, hereditary risks of ionizing radiation, and low-level radiation.

3. Currently the Scientific Committee's estimates were used by Governments and organizations throughout the world as the scientific basis for evaluating radiation risk, establishing nuclear safety and radiation protection standards and regulating radiation sources. For example, they were used by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in the discharge of its statutory functions of establishing radiation safety standards and providing for their application. In addition, the information provided by the Scientific Committee was used by the General Assembly in making recommendations, in particular those relevant to international cooperation in the health sector.

4. He expressed appreciation to the World Health Organization, IAEA, the International Commission on Radiation Units and Measurements, the International Commission on Radiological Protection, the International Union of Radioecology and the Nuclear Energy Agency for their participation in the Scientific Committee's fifty-second session as observers.

5. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that, as in previous years, the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

6. **Mr. Gerts** (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the candidate countries Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania, the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Serbia and Montenegro, and the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, said that the most recent report of the Scientific Committee confirmed its status as the principal international body in the field. Despite budgetary constraints, it regularly published reports on a vast array of topics related to the effects of ionizing radiation. The results of the research carried out by the Scientific Committee were a valuable source of reliable information for professional users, and the European Union welcomed the dissemination of that information to a wider readership via the Internet.

7. The European Union welcomed the continued exchange of information and cooperation between relevant international organizations, representatives of which had attended meetings of the Scientific Committee during the current year.

8. The European Union reiterated its full support for the Scientific Committee, which provided the international community with essential and independent information that was necessary for the evaluation of the levels and effects of atomic radiation.

9. **Mr. Myaing** (Myanmar) associated himself with the statement to be made by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). In view of the limited resources in fossil fuels in that region, atomic energy must be considered an important alternative source of energy. However, with the growing use of nuclear power came an increased risk of leaks of atomic radiation. There was also the danger of the proliferation of nuclear weapons with the attendant worry that they might fall into the hands of terrorists. In that connection, his delegation attached great importance to the work of the Scientific Committee.

10. His delegation was pleased to note that the Scientific Committee had been able to resume its detailed technical discussions at its fifty-second session, held in Vienna in April 2004. However, it wished once again to express concern regarding the inadequacy of the operating budget for the implementation of its programme of work. It was to be hoped that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) would be able to address that issue.

11. Myanmar was one of the countries that had been exercising its legitimate right to use atomic energy for developmental purposes in cooperation with IAEA. The Agency provided sustained assistance in such fields as medicine, agriculture, human resources

development and nuclear technology support, nuclear engineering and technology and nuclear safety, nuclear physics, nuclear chemistry, industry and hydrology, and general energy development. Since 1998 Myanmar had had an Atomic Energy Law, which was intended to regulate all activities related to the use of atomic energy and to prevent the negative effects of atomic radiation on man and the environment. The enactment of that law had brought about an enhancement of contacts with foreign research institutions and organizations, leading to progress in the acquisition of knowledge and the development of technology in the field of atomic energy.

12. Myanmar was also actively participating in regional and interregional projects related, in particular, to the formulation of laws on the safe application of atomic energy, national regulatory controls, occupational radiation protection programmes and the development of the technical basis for the creation of a sustainable radiation protection and radioactive waste disposal infrastructure.

13. Being fully aware of the destructive effects of the production and testing of nuclear weapons, Myanmar had ratified the South-East Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty which was designed to protect the region from environmental pollution and the hazardous effects of radioactive waste and other radioactive materials. His delegation believed that to ensure the maximum effectiveness of such treaties it was essential that nuclear-weapon States should cooperate with nuclear-weapon-free-zone States and respect their regimes while giving them the necessary support.

14. It went without saying that comprehensive knowledge of exposure sources and of the negative effects of atomic radiation could only be beneficial to efforts to protect the environment, promote safety in the workplace and reduce risks in its medical applications. In that connection, the Scientific Committee should continue to play its central role in assisting countries by providing relevant scientific information in order to minimize the effects of radiation on human beings and the environment. The Scientific Committee's work therefore deserved further support and cooperation on the part of all Member States and relevant United Nations agencies.

15. **Mr. Cardoso** (Brazil), speaking on behalf of the members of the Common Market of the Southern Cone (MERCOSUR), Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, and the associated States Bolivia, Chile and Peru, said that those States were very interested in the international community being able to conduct an assessment of the effects of atomic radiation on people, and it was to be hoped that the results of the research being carried out would supplement the existing data on the question.

16. MERCOSUR attached great significance to the Scientific Committee's work on assessing the level and danger of ionizing radiation from natural sources. Evidence of that was provided by the fact that scientists from those countries had been taking part in its work and were cooperating directly with it. MERCOSUR also welcomed the Scientific Committee's work on radionuclide transfer in the environment.

17. In its 49 years of existence the Scientific Committee had made a substantial contribution to ensuring a safe environment. Its findings were recognized and used by a number of international organizations, including the International Commission on Radiological Protection.

18. MERCOSUR approved the Scientific Committee's new programme of work, which envisaged research on such topics as the effects of radiation on workers and the population, radioecology, the evaluation of new epidemiological studies of radiation and cancer medical radiation exposures and the effects of radiation on the immune system. In that connection, he referred to the need to provide the Committee with the appropriate means to fulfil its mandate.

19. In conclusion, he spoke of the commitment of the States members of MERCOSUR and the associated States to the use of nuclear energy exclusively for peaceful purposes. The international agreements and mechanisms to which those countries were Parties guaranteed the peaceful use of the atom in those countries and provided for the free exchange of materials and technologies among their scientific institutions.

Agenda item 20: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*continued*) (A/59/23 (chap. XII, sect. D), A/C.4/59/L.2/Rev.1 and L.4)

***Draft resolution on the question of Western Sahara,* (A/C.4/59/L.4)**

20. **Mr. Bako** (Niger) and **Ms. Simmons** (Bahamas) said that their delegations did not wish to be sponsors of the draft resolution.

21. **The Chairman** said that Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Burundi, Dominica, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Liberia, Malawi, Micronesia, Nauru, the Niger, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sierra Leone, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda and Venezuela had become sponsors of the draft resolution, in addition to those listed in document A/C.5/59/L.4. The Bahamas, Barbados, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Niger and Saint Kitts and Nevis had indicated that they were no longer sponsors of the draft resolution.

22. **Mr. Bennouna** (Morocco) noted that a number of States had ceased to be sponsors. It occurred to him that they might have been included as sponsors in violation of United Nations norms. His delegation continued to strive for consensus and, as recently as the previous evening, had accepted a compromise formula proposed by the European Union. The Algerian delegation, however, had rejected that formula. The time had come to state openly that a certain delegation was forcing the Committee to vote on the draft resolution, which would run counter to the established procedure and would not be in anyone's interests. The text before the Committee could not be considered a consensus text as the majority of delegations did not support it. Responsibility for the division within the Committee lay with one delegation.

23. **Mr. Baali** (Algeria) said that it was strange to hear a lecture on adherence to the rules from the representative of a country that was occupying another. The implication that delegations had been pressured into becoming sponsors was insulting and unfounded. Indeed, it was an entirely normal occurrence for States first to become and then cease to be sponsors of a draft resolution. Lastly, his delegation regarded the text under consideration as a consensus text. The representative of Morocco should decide whether he would request a vote, bearing in mind that he was responsible for the split within the Committee.

24. **Mr. Bennouna** (Morocco) said that he had already had occasion to explain the inappropriateness of allegations of occupation. The representative of Algeria should refer more often to international law. As to the issue of consensus, the rules of procedure of the General Assembly contained no stipulation in that regard and referred only to voting. The consensus procedure had emerged at the United Nations in a specific historical context. Under that procedure, if the Chairman heard no significant objections in his consultations with the main actors, he would propose that a decision should be adopted without a vote. The Algerian text was not a consensus text, but despite that the Algerian delegation was refusing to acknowledge its responsibility.

25. **Mr. Badji** (Senegal) noted with regret that, instead of adopting a consensus text, the Committee was engaging in a rather heated debate. If a vote was taken on the draft resolution, his delegation would be forced to abstain.

26. **Mr. Baali** (Algeria) said that he pitied the representative of Morocco, who had just alluded to international law: it was painful to see such an eminent jurist, who had devoted his life to the way of law, compelled to defend an unjust cause. The situation with respect to consensus was simple: if a delegation requested that a vote should be taken, a vote was taken, and if not, the decision in question was adopted without a vote. His delegation had not made such a request, nor had any other delegation. The representative of Morocco had a choice: he could either request a vote and take responsibility for the split within the Committee, or he could remain silent, in which case the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

27. **Mr. Awad** (Egypt) said that he shared the sentiments expressed by the representative of Senegal. He wished to know whether there was still a chance of achieving a consensus by giving the interested parties more time for negotiation.

28. **Mr. Badji** (Senegal) said that the Chairman must take steps to address the situation that had arisen, guided by the Committee's tradition of negotiation and decision-making by consensus.

29. **The Chairman** said that he could only carry out the Committee's will.

30. **Mr. Baali** (Algeria) said that all possibilities for negotiation and consultation had been exhausted. He requested the Chairman to proceed to a decision on the draft resolution without wasting the Committee's time, particularly since no other formal proposal had been made.

31. **Mr. Badji** (Senegal) said that he wished to make a formal proposal for negotiations to continue with a view to producing a consensus text.

32. **Mr. Baali** (Algeria) said that the sponsors of the draft resolution had been flexible and had met the European Union halfway when it had requested that action on the matter should be deferred for 48 hours. The result was that the representative of Morocco was painting the situation as if the Algerian delegation had suffered a defeat because it had not obtained the adoption of the draft resolution.

33. **Mr. Bennouna** (Morocco), speaking on a point of order, said that that was completely false and that he had merely pointed out to the representative of Algeria the reports in the Algerian press. He demanded that the representative of Algeria should withdraw his comments.

34. **Mr. Baali** (Algeria) suggested that the representative of Morocco should remain silent. He requested the representative of Senegal to withdraw his proposal since all avenues of negotiation had been exhausted.

35. **Mr. Badji** (Senegal) said that he would insist on his proposal for he believed that, if there was more time, there would be a place for negotiations.

The meeting was suspended at 11.30 a.m. and resumed at 12.05 p.m.

36. **Mr. Ndiaye** (Gabon) recalled the Committee's tradition of consensus on the question and expressed the wish that that tradition should be preserved, despite the diverging views. He agreed with the representative of Senegal that it would be wiser to defer action on the draft resolution in order to give both parties time to work out a text that was acceptable to all.

37. **The Chairman** said that everything possible would be done to ensure that the draft resolution was adopted by consensus. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to postpone action on the draft resolution until Monday, 18 October 2004, in accordance with the understanding reached in the consultations held during the suspension.

38. *It was so decided.*

39. **The Chairman** suggested that the Committee should hear an explanation from the representative of the Office of Legal Affairs concerning the procedural implications if no consensus was reached.

40. **Ms. Khalil** (Office of Legal Affairs) said that, although the desire to adopt decisions by consensus had been incorporated in the practice of the General Assembly and its Main Committees, there was no reference in the rules of procedure to consensus, adoption of decisions without a vote or general agreement. The rules of procedure made provision for voting; that did not, however, preclude the adoption of decisions by consensus, where it existed. Thus, if there was nothing to indicate a lack of consensus, decisions could be adopted without a vote. Lack of consensus could be manifested by a direct request for a vote, by an objection to the adoption of a decision without a vote or by an indication that there was no consensus. In any of those cases, the Chairman was obliged to put the draft resolution in question to the vote.

41. **Mr. Badji** (Senegal) said that, while he agreed with the explanation given by the representative of the Office of Legal Affairs, the rules of procedure should be seen in the light of the tasks facing the United Nations as a political forum. Moreover, those rules had been elaborated in a bygone era, when the world had been divided. In the current conditions of globalization and rapprochement of peoples, consensus had virtually become the norm. Voting took place in rare and exceptional cases. Taking that into account, the emphasis should be on uniting countries, not dividing them.

42. **Mr. Baali** (Algeria) said that his delegation respected the legal conclusions just given and was prepared to abide by them. It would not make political judgements about a procedure that had existed for many years, nor would it contest it.

43. **Mr. Bennouna** (Morocco) thanked all delegations that had helped Algeria and Morocco to pursue their dialogue and expressed the hope it would come to a successful conclusion.

Draft resolution on the question of New Caledonia (draft resolution IV), contained in document A/59/23

Draft resolution on the increase in the membership of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, contained in document A/C.4/59/L.2/Rev.1

44. The Chairman said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that, in the interests of ensuring the effectiveness of the Committee's work, members agreed to defer consideration of the aforementioned draft resolutions.

45. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.

United Nations A/C.4/59/SR.11

General Assembly
Fifty-ninth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
23 December 2004

Original: English

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 11th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 18 October 2004, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Swe ..... (Myanmar)

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Agenda item 74: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*)

Agenda item 73: Effects of atomic radiation (*continued*)

Agenda item 20: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*continued*)

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04-55860 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 74: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*) (A/59/20 and A/C.4/59/L.7)

1. **Ms. Grant** (Canada) recalled Canada's rich history in space exploration, including satellites, participation in manned space flights and the robotic arms which played a key role in the work of space shuttles and the international space station. In a vast country like Canada, communications satellites played a key role in linking people and communities, and she noted the launch of the Anik F2, one of the most powerful communications satellites ever built, in July 2004. The Canadian Space Programme also included a strong space science component with over five decades of experience and particular expertise in upper atmospheric research, contributing to better understanding of the earth's environment and global climate change and helping manage natural resources and disasters. The soon to be launched Radarsat-2 satellite would maintain Canada's leadership in satellite technology.

2. The important role currently played in the world economy by communication, navigation and remote sensing satellites underscored the benefits to be gained from the peaceful uses of outer space; her Government would continue to actively support the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS). It would also continue to seek to ensure the security of its orbital assets while at the same time opposing the positioning of weapons in outer space. Recalling that in 1967 the United Nations had agreed that weapons of mass destruction must not be based in space, she said that the time had come to extend that ban to all weapons.

3. During the preceding three years, her delegation had been actively involved in supporting the work of the various action teams created to ensure the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) and she welcomed the extensive progress made thanks to that innovative mechanism. Canada had co-chaired the action team on disaster management and her delegation therefore fully supported the recommendation that a study be conducted on the possibility of establishing an international entity to provide coordination and ensure the most effective use of space-based services for disaster management.

4. **Mr. Song Se Il** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that all Member States must be united in their opposition to the militarization of outer space. Despite the agreements reached within the framework of UNISPACE III, the deployment of spy and war equipment in outer space was intensifying. Denouncing other countries' satellite launches for peaceful purposes as "missile testing" could never justify the establishment of a missile defence system by a certain Member State bent on realizing its own military and strategic ambitions to dominate the world. Member States should make every effort to set up international legal mechanisms to prevent such militarization of outer space.

5. Outer space was the common possession of all nations and all countries and peoples must participate freely and equally in its peaceful exploration and uses. Attempts to monopolize the exploration of outer space or to maintain technological supremacy by hampering the activities of developing countries must not be tolerated. The developed countries should share the latest achievements in space technology with the developing countries, and all space programmes of the United Nations system must give priority to helping developing countries to develop their space technologies and benefit from the application of space technology to, inter alia, disaster management, remote sensing, distance education, environmental protection, and natural resource management.

6. **Mr. Ahmad Shabery** (Malaysia) welcomed the recommendation that the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Thailand should become members of COPUOS. He stressed his delegation's support for the role of the United Nations as the focal point for international cooperation in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space. Malaysia's National Space Agency was developing indigenous capacity while actively seeking effective partnerships through international cooperation to complement its own resources. International cooperation in outer space-related activities would help bring the benefits of space technologies to the peoples of the world. His delegation believed that further efforts to strengthen COPUOS and make it more effective.

7. Advances in space science and technology had increased the risk of the deployment of weapons into

outer space. In addition to posing a threat to the peaceful use of outer space, such weapons would add to the problem of space debris, posing an additional hazard to satellites and other launched space objects. An international agreement to prevent an arms race in outer space and prohibit the deployment of weapons in outer space should be concluded and the Committee should likewise establish a practical mechanism for coordinating its work with other relevant bodies, such as the Conference on Disarmament.

8. Malaysia was currently working on a second earth observation satellite developed in collaboration with the Republic of Korea, to be launched late in 2005; a mission control centre was being built to support the operations of that satellite as well as satellites in low-earth and medium-earth orbit, and the Malaysian centre for remote sensing ground receiving station, which had been operating since the end of 2003, would be the main receiving station for the new satellite. His Government had hosted several international space-related meetings, in particular on remote sensing applications in the area of education, Malaysia had initiated many space-related educational programmes. His Government was developing an astronaut programme, in conjunction with the Russian Federation, to launch a Malaysian astronaut into space. An extensive public awareness campaign had been implemented and was being well received. Malaysia was currently setting up a national observatory that would house a robotic, remotely accessed telescope, which would be completed by the end of 2005 and would be available for use by astronomers from anywhere in the world.

9. His delegation co-chaired action team 9 on implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III on improving knowledge-sharing; a questionnaire had been sent to Member States to assess current usage of satellite communications systems and 28 responses, mostly from the Asian, African and European regions, had been received. The survey had shown that most Member States regarded a satellite-based telecommunication systems as easy to implement and cost-effective for rural areas, but that commercial viability and the high cost of services remained major impediments. It appeared that government assistance would be required to overcome those impediments and address the issue of the digital divide in rural areas. The action team would continue its research, especially with regard to developing countries, before moving on to the next phase of its work.

10. With the successful maiden flight of Space Ship One, the age of commercialized space travel had begun. Several issues needed to be considered by the Committee, such as the status of space tourists and their vehicles in the context of current international treaties and conventions and the application of the Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space. His delegation would continue to contribute to regional and international initiatives for space cooperation in order to meet the goals of sustainable development.

Draft resolution A/C.4/59/L.7: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

Draft resolution contained in Annex II of the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/59/20): Application of the concept of the "launching State"

11. **Mr. Ablodun** (Nigeria) speaking as Chairman of the working group of the whole on agenda item 74 and introducing the draft resolutions under that item, said that the draft resolution entitled "Application of the concept of the 'launching State'" was aimed at facilitating adherence to and the application of United Nations treaties on outer space, in particular the Liability Convention and the Registration Convention. The format and text of the draft resolution had been approved by the Legal Subcommittee and subsequently by COPUOS at its forty-seventh session. Draft resolution A/C.4/59/L.7 covered the work of COPUOS and its subsidiary bodies for the coming year. The text was similar to the resolution on the same issue adopted at the previous session, updated to reflect the current situation, including the addition of references to disaster management and environmental protection, the Fifth Space Conference of the Americas, support for the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and follow-up to the World Conference on Disaster Reduction. It also provided for the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Thailand to become members of the Committee. The working group of the whole had agreed upon the texts of the two draft resolutions by consensus.

12. **Mr. Calderón** (Ecuador), referring to paragraph 22 of draft resolution A/C.4/59/L.7, requested that the

words "the second half of 2005 or in" be inserted following the words "to be held in Quito in".

13. **Mr. Maleki** (Islamic Republic of Iran), referring to paragraph 29 of draft resolution A/C.4/59/L.7, requested that the words "Islamic Republic of Iran," be inserted following the words "in Tehran".

14. **The Chairman** said he had been informed by the Secretariat that draft resolution A/C.4/59/L.7 contained no programme budget implications.

15. *Draft resolution A/C.4/59/L.7, as orally revised, was adopted.*

16. **The Chairman** said he had been informed by the Secretariat that the draft resolution entitled "Application of the concept of the 'launching State'" contained no programme budget implications.

17. *The draft resolution entitled "Application of the concept of the 'launching State'" was adopted.*

Agenda item 73: Effects of atomic radiation (*continued*) (A/59/46 and A/C.4/59/L.8)

18. **Mr. Fallou** (Syrian Arab Republic) reiterated his delegation's support for the work of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation; it was urgent that sufficient funding be provided to allow that Committee to meet its responsibilities and fulfil the mandate given to it by the Organization. Ionizing radiation should be used for peaceful purposes in areas such as medicine, industry and agriculture with a view to promoting development and providing benefits for humanity while at the same time protecting the environment. Accordingly, there should be no conditions placed on the transfer of nuclear technology to States which wished to use that technology for peaceful purposes; he called on developing countries to take advantage of nuclear technology solely for peaceful purposes.

19. His Government had always opposed the stockpiling of weapons, including nuclear weapons, which posed a threat to humanity. It had been one of the first countries to advocate that the Middle East should be declared a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons; it had signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty and complied with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. In December 2003 it had submitted a draft resolution to the Security Council calling for the declaration of the Middle East as a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, under international supervision, which would strengthen efforts for disarmament at the international level. In that context, he stressed that lack of supervision of Israel's nuclear facilities raised the possibility of a leak which could pose a threat to neighbouring countries and the world in general. The international community must exert pressure on Israel to place its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards, in accordance with Security Council resolution 487 (1981). He stressed that the negative effects of atomic radiation posed a danger to all the peoples of the world, a solution to that problem could be found only through international cooperation, good will and commitment.

20. **Mr. Lopez** (Cuba) said that the high quality of the Scientific Committee's reports enabled them to be used as reference documents for the adoption of national and international policies. The current report (A/59/46) contained a comprehensive review of the risks facing the offspring of persons who had been exposed to ionizing radiation which would assist in carrying out preventive action to diminish the impact of diseases stemming from inherited and environmental factors. Cuba was working with Ukraine to deal with the aftermath of the accident at Chernobyl. In 1990, a specialized hospital had been founded in Havana for that purpose, and more than 21,000 patients from the Russian Federation and Belarus had since been treated, including almost 18,000 children. In addition, a brigade of six Cuban doctors was working with the Amistad sanatorium in the Crimea to care for children from Chernobyl.

21. His delegation wished to stress the importance of maintaining and strengthening the cooperation between the Scientific Committee and the agencies and institutions of the United Nations system, and to reiterate that eliminating the dangers of ionizing radiation could be achieved only through broad cooperation on the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

22. **Ms. Tareo** (Marshall Islands) said that item 73 was of the utmost concern to the people of her country. Between 1946 and 1958, the United States of America had conducted a series of nuclear tests there, including the detonation of 67 atomic and hydrogen bombs. In March 2004, the Marshall Islands had commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Bravo test conducted at Bikini Atoll, a blast that had been 1,000 times more powerful than the atomic bomb that was dropped on

Hiroshima. The fallout had spread radioactive debris across the islands, and many persons continued to suffer from long-term health effects, while others remained displaced from their contaminated homes.

23. The Marshall Islands strongly supported the work of the Scientific Committee and its efforts to publicize its findings on the Internet. It fully supported that Committee's request for funding at the level originally requested for 2004 and 2005.

24. **Mr. Chaliha** (India) said that the effects of atomic radiation had immense implications for the health and well-being of occupational workers, people undergoing radiation therapy, and persons living in high-level natural radiation background areas, and for the environment. The worldwide distribution of radon and thoron in homes needed to be assessed, since new information had emerged regarding non-targeted effects of exposure. The confounding aspects needed to be carefully evaluated; the Committee should also analyse information regarding the effect of radiation on the environment, particularly on non-human biota. In that regard, his delegation requested the Scientific Committee to take note of the recently published report on the incidence of cancer in the high-level natural radiation background area of Kerala, which had not shown any alarming increase.

25. India appreciated the cooperation taking place between scientists from Belarus, Ukraine and the Russian Federation and their comparative analysis of data, based on a common methodology. In order to engage qualified scientists in different areas of radiation effect assessment, the Scientific Committee would need adequate budgetary support. Moreover, it must continue to hold its annual sessions to fulfil its mandate. India strongly recommended that the current funding should be increased to the level originally requested for the 2004-2005 biennium, and held at that level in future. Finally, he said that the availability on the Internet of documents of the Scientific Committee bore testimony to the scientific recognition and growing awareness of its work.

26. **Mr. Laohaphan** (Thailand), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), praised the work of the Scientific Committee over the years and welcomed its report (A/59/46). Lamenting the inadequate funding of the Scientific Committee's annual meetings the ASEAN hoped that sufficient funding would be provided for its fifty-third session in 2005. The Scientific Committee also needed the full support of all Member States, other United Nations bodies and other relevant international organizations. The ASEAN countries were encouraged by the closer cooperation in 2004 between the Scientific Committee and the World Health Organization (WHO), IAEA, the International Commission on Radiation Units and Measurements, the International Commission on Radiological Protection, the International Union of Radioecology, the Nuclear Energy Agency and other relevant international organizations and hoped that such cooperation would be further strengthened.

27. In 1995, the 10 ASEAN member States had created the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone with a view to promoting nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, while reserving States parties' right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, and enhancing international peace and security. The weapon-free zone was also intended to protect the region from environmental hazards posed by radioactive materials and waste.

28. In the light of the continuing threat of terrorism, and pursuant to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), all ASEAN member countries were intensifying efforts at the national level to prevent weapons of mass destruction and related materials from falling into the hands of non-State actors. In the ASEAN Regional Forum Statement on Non-Proliferation, they had also pledged to enhance cooperation to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery and related materials. In that connection, ASEAN supported the IAEA strengthened safeguards to ensure their protection and requested that assistance should be extended to States in the peaceful use of nuclear and radioactive materials, consistent with international safety and security standards.

29. **Mr. Melenevskyi** (Ukraine) said that his delegation was concerned by the inadequate funding for the Scientific Committee in the current biennium, which might affect the implementation of its approved programme of work, and urged that appropriate measures be taken. Ukraine had consistently supported the activities of that Committee, and continued to attach importance to its findings. It also welcomed official collaboration between that Committee and Ukrainian scientists that had resulted in intensified research on the health effects of the Chernobyl nuclear

accident, and hoped that ongoing comparisons of data, in accordance with a common methodology, would result in valuable recommendations. He drew attention to the joint initiative of Ukraine and other Member States to hold a commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl accident during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly in spring 2006. The Committee should consider inviting countries with special expertise in the field of atomic radiation to join its membership. Ukraine had significant scientific capacity in the area of radiological research, as well as a unique expertise in dealing with the effects of radiation, and therefore was in a position to make a valuable contribution to the work of the Committee.

30. **The Chairman** said that he had been informed that draft resolution A/C.3/59/L.8 had no programme budget implications. Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Finland, Greece, Iceland, India, Israel, Malaysia, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Russian Federation, and Uruguay become sponsors.

31. *Draft resolution A/C.4/59/L.8 was adopted.*

Agenda item 20: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*continued*)

Draft resolution A/C.4/59/L.4: Question of Western Sahara

32. **Mr. Baali** (Algeria) reminded the Committee that at its 10th meeting, on 14 October, it had decided to give delegations additional time to work together to achieve a text that would be acceptable to all. Various meetings had been held, and proposals by the Chairman and the Netherlands had been incorporated into the text. Algeria continued to hope the Committee would stand united on the question of Western Sahara, and that the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote. Clearly, if the other party chose not to join the consensus, the draft resolution would have to be put to a vote.

33. **Mr. Bennouna** (Morocco) said that an earlier proposal had also been made by the European Union, and Algeria had rejected it without discussion. Morocco was open to dialogue. Unfortunately, the main question remained the same: whether Algeria was prepared to accept the decision of the Secretary-General of 11 June 2004 to ask Mr. Alvaro de Soto to take the place of Mr. James A. Baker III, and to pursue a political solution that would be acceptable to all the States in the region. The answer was no. If the answer were yes, Morocco was prepared to join the consensus at once. It could not accept any blocking of the political process, fully respected the advisory opinion offered by the Legal Counsel at the 10th meeting, and suggested that the Committee should proceed to a vote.

34. **Mr. Baali** (Algeria) called the Committee's attention to paragraph 5 of the draft resolution, which expressed the proposal that had been made by the Netherlands. It seemed that Morocco had changed its mind.

35. **Mr. Bennouna** (Morocco) said that everyone was aware of the situation; no one could be misled. The question was, would the parties allow the Secretary-General and Mr. de Soto to pursue efforts to achieve a political solution and break the impasse, or would they not.

36. **The Chairman** said that the Solomon Islands and Suriname had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution. He drew the Committee's attention to a number of editorial changes. In preambular paragraph 3, the date named should be 17 December 2004. In operative paragraphs 8 and 9, the words "fifty-ninth session" should be changed to "sixtieth session".

37. **Mr. Bennouna** (Morocco), explaining his delegation's position, said that Algeria's request for a vote on a draft resolution that made no mention of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Mr. Alvaro de Soto, reflected its deliberate decision to block efforts to find a mutually acceptable political solution, despite its vote on 29 April in favour of Security Council resolution 1541 (2004), which called on the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to continue their efforts. Indeed, following the resignation of Mr. James A. Baker III on 1 June, the Secretary-General, in a letter dated 11 June 2004 addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2004/492), had indicated that in his capacity as Special Representative for Western Sahara, Mr. Alvaro de Soto would continue to work with the parties, and neighbouring countries, in pursuit of a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution. Algeria had chosen to deny Mr. De Soto the opportunity to fulfil his role as mediator. It thus bore a heavy responsibility for blocking the pursuit of a political solution and its effort

to sabotage that process not only stood in glaring contradiction to its vote in favour of Security Council resolution 1541 (2004) but was also inappropriate on the part of a Security Council member at a time when Mr. De Soto was to submit his report to the Council on the work of his assessment mission.

38. In his meeting with Mr. De Soto on 6 September, His Majesty King Mohammed VI had reaffirmed Morocco's commitment to continue cooperating with the United Nations and the other parties in pursuit of a mutually acceptable political solution. In a telephone conversation with the Secretary-General the day before, His Majesty the King had reiterated that same willingness to work with the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Mr. De Soto, to reach a negotiated political solution as soon as possible.

39. By abstaining on the draft resolution submitted by Algeria, Committee members would show their support for the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Mr. De Soto, in their efforts to find a negotiated and mutually acceptable political solution.

40. **Mr. Badji** (Senegal) said that Senegal supported all the efforts made by the Secretary-General and his Special Representative to help the parties concerned reach a mutually acceptable settlement that would be in the legitimate interests of the people of the Maghreb but that because any reference to the important role of the Secretary-General's Special Representative had been deliberately omitted from the draft resolution, his delegation would abstain from any vote on it.

41. **Mr. Sow** (Guinea) said that the draft resolution gave the unfortunate impression that the Committee would not support the ongoing efforts by the Secretary-General and his Special Representative to bring about a negotiated settlement. His delegation would therefore abstain if it was put to a vote.

42. **The Chairman** said that according to the rules of procedure as explained at the previous meeting by the Legal Counsel, and in view of the fact that no consensus had been reached, the Committee had no other recourse but to vote on draft resolution A/C.4/59/L.4, as orally revised.

43. **Mr. Zhang** (Secretary of the Committee) informed the Committee that the Solomon Islands and Suriname had joined the sponsors and that the Bahamas, Barbados, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Niger and Saint Kitts and Nevis had withdrawn their sponsorship.

44. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Botswana, Burundi, Cambodia, China, Colombia, Cuba, Dominica, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Grenada, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Liberia, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nigeria, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, South Africa, Suriname, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

None.

Abstaining:

Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, Comoros, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Yemen.

45. *Draft resolution A/C.4/59/L.4 was adopted by 52 votes to none, with 89 abstentions.*

46. **Mr. Chungong Ayafor** (Cameroon), speaking in explanation of vote after the voting, said that his delegation had abstained because it would have preferred a consensus text. Cameroon, which maintained good relations with all the parties concerned, hoped that they would continue to negotiate to achieve a mutually acceptable solution in order to preserve peace in the subregion and in Africa.

47. **Mr. Ang** (United States of America) said that in the absence of a consensus document, the United States had been unable to support the draft resolution. The rhetoric that had emerged during its discussion was disappointing: any solution to the Western Sahara conflict would require a commitment to compromise by the parties and the States in the region. The United States applauded the work of the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy, who over the past seven years had succeeded in crystallizing areas of agreement and identifying areas of continued disagreement, thereby providing the foundation on which current United Nations efforts must rest. His Government would now continue to consult closely with the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, and hoped that all parties and States of the region would also cooperate fully.

48. **Mr. Duarte** (Brazil) said that his delegation had abstained because a non-consensus text that compelled the Committee to resort to a vote did not reflect the spirit that must guide the peace process and would not advance it in any way. His delegation's vote should not, however, be interpreted as an indication of preference with regard to the future of the peace process, nor should the adoption of the draft resolution constitute an obstacle to successful negotiations. Brazil reiterated its support for the peace plan as set out in the two most recent Security Council resolutions on the matter, and it supported the efforts and role of the Secretary-General in achieving a mutually acceptable political solution that guaranteed the self-determination of the Saharan people.

49. **Mr. Myaing** (Myanmar) said that he regretted that the Committee had had to resort to a vote on what had traditionally been a consensus text, especially when the Security Council had reached consensus on its own resolution 1541 (2004) on the same issue. Because of Myanmar's strong support for the right to self-determination of the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories, his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution. It hoped that both parties would continue to cooperate with the United Nations in pursuit of a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution.

50. **Mr. van den Berg** (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union and the candidate country, Turkey, said that the member States of the European Union as well as Turkey had abstained from the vote because of the lack of consensus on the draft resolution. It supported a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution which would provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, as most recently envisaged in the two resolutions adopted unanimously by the Security Council, and they encouraged the parties concerned to work in that direction. They appreciated the tireless efforts of the former Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, and supported the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, whose responsibility it was to continue to work with the parties in pursuit of a solution.

51. The European Union and Turkey remained deeply concerned about certain pressing humanitarian aspects of the conflict in Western Sahara: the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO) should release without further delay all remaining prisoners of war; all parties should assist the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in determining the fate of those unaccounted for since the beginning of the conflict, and should collaborate with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on family reunification. Such measures would build mutual confidence and advance the resolution of a conflict that had gone on for too long, resulted in too many victims, weighed down the United Nations system, and stood in the way of lasting peace in the region.

52. **Mr. Sinaga** (Indonesia) observed that because the two delegations concerned had been unable to reach consensus through dialogue and cooperation, the Committee had been forced to vote on a contested text. Indonesia, which continued to support the principle of self-determination and a comprehensive solution to the question of Western Sahara, had abstained from the vote, a fact which should not be interpreted as being in favour of either of the parties. In the future, the two delegations should strive to reach a compromise that would lead to a comprehensive settlement.

53. **Mr. Yamamoto** (Japan) said that his delegation had abstained because, regrettably, the expected consensus between the parties had not been reached.

54. **Mr. Awad** (Egypt) said that his delegation had abstained, in the conviction that it was necessary to deal with all aspects of the dispute through direct dialogue between the parties, so as to reach a solution that would permit the people of Western Sahara to live in a climate of understanding that would be favourable to the country's development.

55. **Ms. Alfaro** (El Salvador) said that her delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution because of the international community's abiding interest in a settlement of the question of Western Sahara. The United Nations had an important role to play in furthering negotiations on a just, lasting and mutually acceptable solution in accordance with the peace plan outlined in the Secretary-General's report to the Security Council (S/2003/565 and Corr.1) and in the pertinent resolutions of the Security Council. Her delegation urged the parties directly involved to work together to implement the agreed undertakings.

56. **Ms. Bolaños-Pérez** (Guatemala) said that the peace plan, as outlined in the two latest Security Council resolutions on the question of Western Sahara and as endorsed by the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, had to be accepted by all the parties concerned. In the absence of such agreement with respect to the draft resolution on the question, her delegation had opted to abstain from voting.

57. **Mr. Maquieira** (Chile), regretting the failure to produce a text acceptable to all, said that his delegation had abstained from the vote because it did not want to compromise the position it had taken in the Security Council in adopting resolution 1541 (2004). Its abstention should not, however, be interpreted as a taking of position on the peace process, on which negotiations must continue until it was successfully concluded.

58. **Mr. Smirnov** (Russian Federation) said that, while regretting the departure from the traditional consensus, his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution because of his Government's position of principle that a peaceful solution to the question of Western Sahara must be found through political means, in accordance with Security Council resolutions. The Russian Federation supported the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative to achieve a mutually acceptable solution on the basis of the consensus resolutions of the General Assembly and the unanimous resolutions in which the Security Council had declared its support for the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy, and for the peace process.

59. **Ms. Grant** (Canada), speaking on behalf also of Australia and New Zealand, said that their delegations had abstained because there had been no agreement between the parties concerned on a consensus text. Canada, Australia and New Zealand continued to support a negotiated settlement and all United Nations efforts to that end.

60. **Mr. Melenevskyi** (Ukraine) said that the vote just taken, which ran counter to the established tradition of consensus on draft resolutions on the question of Western Sahara, had not advanced the achievement of a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that would provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in a manner consistent with the Charter of the United Nations. His delegation had therefore decided to abstain.

61. **Mr. Ahmad** (Pakistan) deplored the fact that the delegations concerned had not reached a consensus on a text that could have given momentum to the many General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the question of Western Sahara. His delegation's abstention from the vote should not be interpreted, however, as favouring either party to the dispute. Pakistan supported self-determination for the people of Western Sahara in accordance with the pertinent Security Council resolutions, and negotiations to that end should continue.

62. **Mr. Baali** (Algeria) said that the Committee had once again expressed its view, in a fully democratic process, in favour of the right of the Saharan people to self-determination. Morocco had just provided bloody evidence of its territorial aspirations and its attitude. Its Permanent Representative had expounded on that position the previous week with surprising aplomb, affirming that Western Sahara belonged to Morocco and that it did not need recognition by the international community, in defiance of international law. The Moroccan statement had also reconfirmed the reality that Morocco, entangled in its own contradictions, its repeated about-faces and its persistent actions, was the only country not to see that Western Sahara was a case of unfinished decolonization whose solution lay in the

exercise of the right of the Saharan people to self-determination. At the same time, it had confirmed the rightness and justness of the combat by the heroic people of Western Sahara, who had chosen the path of peace and legality by laying down their weapons and turning to the United Nations in order to realize their legitimate rights, certain that the dynamics of history would work in their favour and ultimately prevail.

63. The Committee had clearly reaffirmed that the question of Western Sahara was a case of decolonization under resolution 1514 (XV) and reiterated its support for the Peace Plan for the Self-Determination of the People of Western Sahara unanimously endorsed by Security Council resolutions 1495 (2003) and 1541 (2004), which his delegation would not reconsider, contrary to the hopes of the delegation of Morocco. He wished to thank the resolution's 42 sponsors, from every continent, for supporting the Saharan cause, and the members of the Committee and the Chairman who had worked so hard to achieve a consensus. From the Atlantic to the Pacific, from Timor-Leste to Western Sahara, Algeria had always supported the self-determination of peoples. That a country should occupy another fraternal country on the pretext of immemorial rights was strangely reminiscent of another country's invocation of Biblical rights to justify its occupation of territories that did not belong to it.

64. **Mr. Bennouna** (Morocco) said that the time for polemics was over. The vote had been taken and he wished to thank all those who, in abstaining, had shown their support for the Secretary-General, the Security Council, and the legality of the United Nations. It was a great day for the United Nations.

65. **The Chairman** expressed deep regret that a solution acceptable to all parties could not be reached and that the Committee, in a departure from tradition, had had to take a vote on the resolution. The delegations of both Algeria and Morocco had cooperated fully with him; however, at the point where he thought it might be possible to continue the tradition and reach a consensus, they had both explained that the differences on the issue were substantive.

Draft resolution IV: Question of New Caledonia (A/59/23, p. 81)

66. **Mr. Ovia** (Papua New Guinea), explaining his delegation's position, said that Papua New Guinea believed in the right to self-determination of all the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories, including New Caledonia, and following consultations with the delegation of France, proposed the following amendment to paragraph 8: the words "of all New Caledonians, especially the indigenous Kanak people", should be deleted and replaced by "and identity of all sectors of the population,".

67. *Draft resolution IV, as orally revised, was adopted.*

68. **Mr. Boispean** (France), speaking in explanation of vote after the voting, thanked all delegations, especially the delegation of Papua New Guinea, for their efforts and the Special Committee, which had facilitated its adoption. France welcomed the version that had just been adopted by consensus and hoped that the positive spirit it embodied would continue in the future.

Draft decision A/C.4/59/L.2/Rev.1: Increase in the membership of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

69. *Draft decision A/C.4/59/L.2/Rev.1 was adopted by consensus.*

70. **Mr. Gregoire** (Dominica), speaking in explanation of vote after the voting, thanked all delegations for supporting the decision just adopted by consensus, and in particular, Papua New Guinea for its initiative in sponsoring the draft decision. Its adoption was very important to his delegation and to his Government. Dominica would endeavour to fulfil its obligations as a member of the Special Committee and to contribute to ensuring the self-determination of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.

United Nations A/C.4/59/SR.12

General Assembly
Fifty-ninth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
23 December 2004

Original: English

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 12th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 19 October 2004, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Kyaw Tint Swe ..... (Myanmar)
later: Mr. Calderón (Vice Chairman) ..... (Ecuador)

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* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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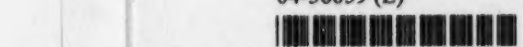

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 78: Questions relating to information (A/59/21, A/59/221 and Corr.1)

Agenda item 109: Programme planning (A/59/6 (Programme 23: Public information) and A/59/16, chap. II, sect. C, Prog. 23)

1. **The Chairman** invited Mr. Shashi Tharoor, the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, to introduce the report of the Secretary-General on questions relating to information (A/59/221 and Corr.1).

2. **Mr. Tharoor** (Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information) said that public information was not extraneous, as many people believed, but a critically important element of the success of the United Nations. The task of the Department of Public Information (DPI) was to convey to the world a sense of the Organization, and its values and issues. That was not an easy task, and the Department was continuing to hone its communications skills and sharpen its focus, using new information and communication technology (ICT), and forging closer partnerships with civil society. The Secretary-General's report (A/59/221) presented a broad overview of the significant results achieved between July 2003 and June 2004.

3. In the aftermath of the Security Council's disagreements on Iraq, a loss of faith in the United Nations had occurred; the polls had not been good, and the global attitudes survey taken by the Pew Research Center had given the United Nations low ratings both in the United States and abroad. Recently, there had been a spate of media attacks on the integrity and leadership of the Organization, including unsubstantiated allegations of corruption in the Oil-for-Food Programme, and muddled criticism related to events in Darfur. Such events had driven home the need to speak loudly, clearly and often about what the United Nations did and why. Public information was essential in order to maintain the support needed to fulfil the Organization's mandates; it also had an impact on the security of staff, particularly those in the field.

4. The Department's objectives remained unchanged, but the challenges it faced had grown; it had learned, in view of shrinking resources and expanding mandates, that it must target its messages and prioritize its options. Recently, the Department had developed a number of new and innovative ways to reach more people. An initiative entitled "Ten stories the world should hear more about" had been launched because too much attention had been concentrated on events in Iraq, to the detriment of all other issues on the global agenda. In consultation with other departments in the United Nations Secretariat, the Department had come up with ten stories on subjects that were not getting enough media attention, including Ugandan child soldiers, South African AIDS orphans, the international help needed by the Central African Republic, and the work being done to promulgate a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities. The full list could be found at www.un.org/events/ten stories. He was sure the Committee understood how extremely hard it was to muster resources and sustained political will to resolve issues and problems that people and politicians knew nothing about.

5. The Department had conducted a concerted promotional campaign, including placing op-eds and interviews in newspapers and magazines, and on radio and television. The response had been encouraging. Articles had appeared in such publications as *The International Herald Tribune*, the *South China Morning Post*, *Corriere della Sera*, and *Die Furche*, as well as in Egyptian and Congolese news venues, and on BBC, RTL Dutch TV, PBS and CNN — a good start. On World Press Day in 2005, the Department would launch another Top 10 list. In the meantime, Member States might wish to discuss the list with journalists and editors, and might suggest that they watch for the next instalment.

6. The Department had learned that by being innovative, it could find ways to reach wider audiences. It had, for example, reoriented its approach towards other departments within the Secretariat, in order to view them as clients to whom information services were provided, and was now better equipped to prepare global strategies. It was a measure of success that departments now routinely included information considerations in planning their work. Since the communication media were mainly interested in stories of conflict, the Department had devoted special attention to focused briefings for journalists on development issues. It was continuing to press the

media with respect to the Millennium Development Goals, but was also speaking directly to the public, and had placed the Goals at the centre of the next annual DPI/NGO Conference. At the previous annual conference, it had asked 3,000 representatives of NGOs from 69 countries to focus on how civil society could promote the Goals, and had set up a series of communication and networking systems to intensify interest around the world, including webcasting the event and running simultaneous conferences at United Nations information centres in Dakar, Asunción and Moscow, as well as at the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in Santiago. In partnership with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, it had created a chart showing the progress made in implementing the Goals by region, using the colours of the traffic light. In addition, the Department's Cyberschoolbus was working with European Schoolnet to develop a Goals web portal for youth and had created a full-colour map to highlight a major Asian highway initiative called "the new Silk Road".

7. Along with UNAIDS and the Kaiser Family Foundation, the Department was managing the Secretary-General's Global Media AIDS Initiative, a partnership with over 20 major global media companies to increase programming on HIV/AIDS issues. It had commenced a three-month trial run with The NewsMarket, an Internet news service that would distribute United Nations videos to television stations, and was producing, in partnership with UNICEF, a daily 10-minute package for distribution by satellite to television newsrooms. In addition, the *UN Chronicle* was now available in six official languages; students and teachers were its primary readers. A survey had shown that 90 per cent felt that the magazine improved their understanding of the Organization. The Department had launched an Unlearning Intolerance programme in 2004: day-long interactive seminars that engaged civil society leaders and a wider audience in discussions of how intolerance could be combated through education and example. The first had focused on anti-Semitism; the next would deal with Islamophobia.

8. DPI was continuing its work with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and together they were developing a comprehensive information strategy to increase awareness among States Members of the surge in the demand for peacekeeping and the need for resources for logistical support, well-trained troops and civilian police. DPI was participating in the assessment of peacekeeping missions and strengthening its support of their information components. Together with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, it had initiated a weeklong training programme for public information officials.

9. As part of its new emphasis on evaluation, the Department had defined measurable indicators for work carried out in each of its subprogrammes, and intended to better gauge what worked and to fix what did not. Although a results-based framework called for monitoring the response to media stories, unfortunately, using external media monitoring and analysis companies was too costly. Since the only viable option was building in-house capacity to monitor and analyse media, the Department had sought the assistance of private sector partners in developing training modules to increase its capacity in that area. It had squeezed a tight budget to provide training to staff in audience research and evaluation techniques; 90 per cent of its programme managers had attended the workshops. The Department was in the second year of a three-year project to institute an internal mechanism for performance management.

10. Regrettably, the cost of using global public opinion polls was also prohibitive. The Department had had some success in finding partners willing to provide that service on a pro bono basis. A polling organization known as Zogby International had agreed to include six questions relating to the Millennium Development Goals in a poll covering countries of the Middle East. Half of those polled in Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon, and less than a third of those polled in Morocco, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates had revealed a favourable view of the United Nations. Most respondents had not given the United Nations credit for any significant improvements in poverty reduction or primary education. Only a third of those polled in Jordan and Lebanon had given the Organization credit for its efforts to combat HIV/AIDS; that figure was 40 per cent in Saudi Arabia.

11. The Department was working to build a response to the decreased support for the United Nations in the Arab world, and to improve public understanding of the Organization there. It had held a meeting of regional information specialists to work on a strategic communications framework that was now being implemented. In addition, it had established a focal

point for Arab media, which had expanded the audience there, in particular by disseminating key statements and other materials in Arabic through the United Nations information centres.

12. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library, under a new head, was in the process of developing a more responsive, user-focused service and was taking the lead in the Steering Committee for the Modernization and Integrated Management of United Nations Libraries in giving the libraries a new strategic direction. Already, a common web gateway to all United Nations libraries and a documentation access programme had been set up, and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) library had been designated a common library for all United Nations offices in Nairobi.

13. One of the yardsticks of success cited by the Secretary-General in his report (A/59/221) was the number of pages viewed by visitors to the United Nations web site, sorted by language and, indeed, some of the language sites had registered truly phenomenal growth. While three-quarters of all the pages viewed were still in English, the gap was gradually shrinking, and there was a constant addition of material to the web site in the other official languages, although much still needed to be done to achieve parity.

14. In the meantime, there had been a series of innovations aimed at greater multilingualism: the United Nations News Centre now worked in several languages and, drawing upon the linguistic competence of News and Media Division staff, the very popular e-mail service should be available in all languages by March 2005; the Department was now able to produce several language versions of its daily news bulletin posted on the News Centre online portal; webcasting should be available in all languages by the end of the year, and speedy rebroadcasts over the web site were now done in one additional language as well; accessibility of the web site to users with disabilities was also being enhanced. It should be noted, however, that financial constraints were hampering such efforts at multilingualism, and the hiring freeze had prevented recruitment of necessary staff to provide General Assembly coverage and the production of press releases and other material.

15. Some progress had been made on the rationalization of the network of United Nations information centres. It was too soon, however, to assess the effectiveness and impact of the new Regional United Nations Information Centre, replacing nine Western European information centres. A cautious approach was being taken, in consultation with the Member States concerned and in consideration of the merits of each situation, to introducing changes elsewhere. Unfortunately, the totally unexpected reduction of the operational budget of the information centres at the recommendation of the Fifth Committee had deprived the information centres in developing countries of the benefit they were to have received from the savings achieved through the scaling-down of operations in Western Europe. Moreover, rising costs and the impact of that overall budget reduction had affected the ability of all information centres — already the poor relative of the United Nations family — to carry out meaningful outreach and programme activities, and that might force the closure of a number of centres. The Department was counting on Member States to argue for greater financial support that would re-energize the information centres, upgrade their facilities, and put the rationalization process back on track.

16. The Department would welcome the Fourth Committee's review of its proposed strategic framework for 2006-2007, as recommended by the Committee for Programme and Coordination. It had been approved almost without revision by the Committee on Information, whose views were reflected in its report (A/59/21) and in paragraphs 33 to 40 of that Committee's draft resolution B.

17. In 2005, Member States would debate the report of the high-level panel examining the entire architecture of the international system built up since 1945, and would also review the Millennium Development Goals. Thus, the Organization's sixtieth anniversary year would be a crucial one, during which it contemplated renewal, and during which the importance of effective public information would continue to grow.

18. **Ms. Miller** (Jamaica), speaking as Rapporteur of the Committee on Information, introduced the report of the Committee on Information on its twenty-sixth session (A/59/21), which had been adopted unanimously by the Committee. The report highlighted events such as World Press Freedom Day, commemorated on 3 May each year, and the inclusion of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Switzerland as members of the Committee, bringing

total membership to 102 Member States. It described the work of the Committee in relation to issues such as the reform of DPI, freedom of the press and of speech, coordination between the Committee on Information and DPI, the importance of the United Nations web site, the role of information in peacekeeping and rationalization of the United Nations information centres.

19. The report also contained two draft resolutions, entitled "Information in the service of humanity" and "United Nations public information policies and activities", which included references to the World Summit on the Information Society, the new programme priorities for DPI, the role of information in peacekeeping, strengthening of dialogue among civilizations and the culture of peace as a means of enhancing understanding among nations. They also included references to the work of the news services, the United Nations web site and library services and outreach services.

20. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Bangladesh), speaking as Chairman of the Committee on Information, stressed the importance of DPI as the public voice of the Organization and welcomed the close partnership between the Department and the Committee, leading to a broader dialogue between the two. The major structural overhaul of DPI had begun to yield concrete and positive results; use of available technologies had, for example, become more strategic, the messages transmitted were sharper and the audiences targeted better defined. As a result of its emphasis on a culture of evaluation, the Department was better equipped to measure the results of public information and communication activities.

21. The Department nevertheless continued to face challenges in its efforts to rationalize the network of United Nations information centres, caused in part by the lack of resources as a result of actions by the Fifth Committee as well as the devaluation of the dollar and rising costs in general. Action must be taken to avoid further undermining the Department's ability to deliver the message of the Organization. The Department should also proceed cautiously in rationalizing the network of United Nations information centres, a process which should be undertaken as a strategic move and not a cost-cutting exercise. As Chairman of the Committee on Information, he would continue to act as a bridge between the Department and Member States in order to reach consensus on the goals set and on the directions to be taken.

22. **Mr. Al-Nasser** (Qatar), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that DPI was the only department of the Secretariat entrusted with the important task of being the public voice of the Organization; it should therefore focus on strategically communicating the activities and concerns of the Organization in order to bring it closer to the people of the world. The Department had been guided in that task by its new mission statement and communication strategy and by the organization of its activities within four subprogrammes. The reorientation exercise launched in 2002 for enhancing the performance and effectiveness of the Department should be continued. The challenge facing the Department was not only to ensure wider outreach but also to contribute to the realization of the goals and objectives set out in the Millennium Declaration and the medium-term plan. It should promote in particular priority development issues such as poverty eradication, sustainable development, HIV/AIDS, dialogue among civilizations and cultures and the needs of African countries, as well as preventing and combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. More information regarding such activities would be welcome.

23. Member States, including many from the Group of 77 and China, were strongly committed to peacekeeping operations and had even suffered losses in pursuing the noble goals of international peace. It was therefore important to close the information gap which existed between the new realities and successes of peacekeeping operations and public perception; that would be one way of realizing the United Nations goals and objectives and should be an objective of DPI.

24. With regard to rationalization of the United Nations information centres, the Group of 77 and China remained committed to strengthening the information system, especially in developing countries. The process of establishing the regional United Nations Information Centre in Brussels was not yet complete, and it was too early to decide whether a similar process was warranted for other regions. Any further regionalization should be undertaken on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the Member States concerned, in accordance with the recommendations of the Committee on Information. Given the differences in ICT between Western Europe and other regions of the world, especially the developing countries, great

caution should be exercised when contemplating the extension of the regionalization process.

25. The lack of funding to support the core functions of the United Nations information centres, which had hindered their ability to sustain regular activities and provide for multilingualism, was a source of concern. He therefore welcomed improvements in the United Nations web sites in all official languages and stressed the need to achieve equal treatment of all languages on United Nations web sites. To that end, more resources should be allocated, taking into account the specificity of some official languages which used non-Latin and bidirectional scripts. He also reaffirmed paragraph 42 of General Assembly resolution 58/270, which requested the Secretary-General to continue to strengthen the United Nations web site through further redeployment to the required language posts.

26. Given the importance of traditional means of communication such as radio, in particular in remote areas in developing countries, it was also important to preserve and consolidate such services, which were often the only means of reaching large numbers of people. The Group of 77 therefore expressed its appreciation to the United Nations radio staff for their daily work in conveying the message of the Organization to the people in the latter's own languages.

27. **Mr. Gerts** (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the candidate countries Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey, and the countries of the stabilization and association process and potential candidates, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro, acknowledged the central role played by DPI in increasing awareness of the United Nations and its work. The European Union fully supported the Department in achieving that goal and therefore welcomed the restructuring of the Department; the creation of three separate divisions enabled it to work in a more efficient, effective and modern manner.

28. Noting the consolidation of nine information centres in Western Europe into one Regional United Nations Information Centre in Brussels, he said that Centre, though still in its early stages, would eventually provide valuable information and documentation and work with Governments, civil society and non-governmental organizations. The Centre was the first of many in the regionalization process, which would in the long run reduce costs and increase the efficiency of information services. The European Union therefore reiterated its strong support for that concept, hoping that the lessons learned in Europe would be useful in implementing the rationalization process in other regions.

29. The European Union welcomed the efforts of the Department to enhance multilingualism; the United Nations news centre web site was increasingly accessible in languages other than English and 53 of the United Nations information centres around the world currently had web sites in their local languages. The extensive improvements to the United Nations web site made it possible to log on to the web site from anywhere in the world and follow the daily work of the Organization or international issues which were not always adequately covered by the media. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library was also a valuable source of information on a wide range of topics, not only for delegates but also for anyone around the world. Those resources contributed to improved understanding of the role of the Organization by offering extended coverage of various topics, including peacekeeping operations regarding which there was clearly a considerable gap between public perception and reality. DPI would continue to play the main role in providing such crucial information.

30. Although the Internet was growing fast and could be useful in spreading the Organization's message, it should not be forgotten that whereas in North America and Europe 68 per cent and 31 per cent of the population respectively had Internet access, in Asia and Africa the corresponding figures were only 6.5 per cent and 1.4 per cent respectively. Developed countries had a responsibility to prevent nations from falling behind on the technological highway and, in that context, he recalled the upcoming Tunis phase of the World Summit on the Information Society in 2005. In areas of the world where technological development still had a long way to go, however, radio broadcasting remained the most cost-effective and far-reaching medium. It was therefore important that the Department of Public Information continue to use all media in spreading the message of the Organization.

31. The European Union underscored its commitment to freedom of expression and regretted that in too many countries freedom of expression was still a distant prospect despite being a universal and fundamental human right. It condemned any attempt by the

authorities to control and influence the media and stressed that freedom of the press was fundamental for any society. Unfortunately, too many journalists still faced incredible challenges in trying to do their work. The European Union had the profoundest respect and admiration for journalists who put their lives at risk on a daily basis in order to provide the public with reliable information and honoured the memory of those who had sacrificed their lives for that purpose.

32. *Mr. Calderón (Ecuador), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

33. **Mr. Maleki** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the special needs of developing countries in the field of ICT must be taken into account before any programme that might jeopardize their economic and social development was implemented. Unfortunately, the disparities between developed and developing countries in that area were increasing, and certain countries were taking advantage of the situation to encroach on the sovereignty and interests of other countries or distort the realities of developing nations. Assistance for the development of communication infrastructure and capabilities in developing countries must be stepped up in order to reduce discrepancies in information flows.

34. Turning to the issue of regionalization, he stressed the need to avoid any misunderstanding or hasty decision that might negatively affect the functioning of DPI, particularly its outreach services. In that connection, the closure of United Nations information centres would diminish even further the amount of information about the United Nations available to the populations of the countries affected. DPI also had a crucial role to play in combating biased information propagated by the media monopolies. He expressed his delegation's appreciation for the Department's annual training programme for broadcasters and journalists from developing countries and the hope that all developing countries would be able to benefit from it equally. In conclusion, he encouraged the Department to allocate resources and technical facilities to developing and expanding web pages and/or radio programmes in local languages, and to strengthen its activities in areas of special interest to developing countries.

35. **Mr. Al-Nuaimi** (United Arab Emirates) called for a comprehensive and effective strategy to develop information structures and systems, train human resources and broadcast information and public programmes free of charge in developing countries with a view to enhancing their integration in international development programmes. In that context, his delegation was concerned about attempts by Western media, particularly in the wake of 11 September 2001, to fuel feelings of hatred and racial discrimination against certain developing countries, including Islamic nations. The Western media must develop an international code of conduct for information and communications that guaranteed credibility and transparency and used existing channels of information to promote public outreach programmes on development, strengthen integration among peoples and enhance mutual respect for diverse cultures and religious beliefs.

36. The United Arab Emirates supported the initiatives by DPI to narrow the digital divide between the developing and developed nations, disseminate information on key economic, social, environmental and health issues and publicize a number of the political and security issues being considered by the United Nations, including the termination of foreign occupation, disarmament, counter-terrorism and human rights. It also stressed the importance of enhancing cooperation and coordination between DPI and other United Nations agencies and programmes.

37. He urged DPI to consider the impact of closing and merging some of its regional offices, particularly on the suffering Palestinian population. The Department should develop the skills and abilities of its staff, including the staff of its regional offices, and expand its broadcast network services. His delegation hoped that Arabic language services would be provided at a level comparable to that of other official languages of the United Nations, including increased coverage on the United Nations radio and television, and in the Library and Treaty Section. It also called on the Department to increase the number of workshops, interactive seminars, briefings and training courses offered to broadcasters and journalists from developing and poor countries and to work in partnership with regional development programmes combating poverty, environmental deterioration, HIV/AIDS and illiteracy, promoting women's and children's rights and developing human settlements.

38. **Mr. Zhanibekov** (Kazakhstan) supported the efforts of DPI to strengthen the United Nations public information system and to step up public information

activities in every region of the world, including the Commonwealth of Independent States. It hoped that the reorientation of the Department's priorities, structures and processes would be favourably received by the public at large.

39. His delegation supported the consolidation of the United Nations information centres into "regional hubs" in order to streamline the Department's advocacy efforts. In that connection, it called for more extensive coverage of the problem of the Aral Sea and the dire humanitarian consequences of years of nuclear testing at the former Semipalatinsk nuclear testing ground. Continued degradation of the environment in the Aral Sea region not only had a serious impact on the health and livelihood of its population, but had also acquired global dimensions. The salt from its seabed had long been present in the air in Europe and Asia and even over the North Pole. Unfortunately, however, the international community was not fully aware of the serious ramifications of that environmental disaster, and the provision of technical assistance and financial aid had been sporadic.

40. He urged the international community to resume its cooperation in seeking solutions to the social and economic problems of the populations near the former testing ground, which had been exposed to some 500 nuclear-weapons tests conducted by the former Soviet Union at the height of the global arms race. While his delegation was grateful to the Governments of Japan and the United States and to other donors for their assistance, it believed that the problem could be more effectively addressed by multilateral cooperation. The framework for such cooperation already existed in the form of a General Assembly resolution whose potential had not yet been fully exploited.

41. Kazakhstan was expanding its information sector under a special government programme to develop a national information infrastructure. Under the programme, cutting-edge information technologies, computer hardware and telecommunications were being introduced. An official government web site had been in operation since 2003, and work was under way on common databases, known as "legal entities" and "resources of Kazakhstan", and an electronic archiving system for State institutions. At the same time, steps were being taken to develop a regulatory framework for electronic document management and the use of electronic signatures on the basis of internationally accepted legal norms. Introduction of a unified system of electronic document management in State institutions was planned for 2005.

42. **Mr. Chun** Yung-woo (Republic of Korea) said that bridging the growing information gap between countries whose native language was one of the six official languages of the United Nations and the rest of the world was more urgent than achieving parity among the six official languages on the United Nations web site. Although the Republic of Korea was the eleventh largest financial contributor to the United Nations budget, 75 million Korean people around the world were among the most disadvantaged in terms of their opportunities to access information on the Organization's activities. In that context, his delegation welcomed the rationalization of the United Nations information centres in Western Europe and in developed countries where the Internet was the most widely used means of searching for information and/or one of the six official languages was spoken. At the same time, however, rationalization must be aimed at strengthening the Organization's information outreach to other countries that did not fall into either of those categories.

43. Traditional means of communication as well should focus greater attention on populations that did not speak one of the official United Nations languages. In that connection, his delegation was pleased to note the weekly broadcasts by the United Nations radio in eight non-official languages. Nonetheless, objective and sensible criteria for the selection of languages used in radio programmes had yet to be established.

44. His delegation welcomed the significant progress achieved by DPI in its utilization of the Internet, the most cost-effective way to deliver information on United Nations activities to the widest possible audience. It supported the Department's efforts to improve the language capacity, webcasting and searchability of the United Nations web site and stressed the need for timely and useful content. With regard to parity among the official United Nations languages on the United Nations web site, he advocated relative parity based on level of demand over absolute parity. It made more sense to invest heavily in frequently accessed web sites than to increase services on web sites for which demand was not as great.

45. **Mr. Hannesson** (Iceland) said that his country was honoured to be a new member of the Committee

on Information and looked forward to participating in its work. Iceland supported the new operating model and organizational structure of DPI. Already, his Government had increased support for the United Nations Association in Iceland and its information activities. Stressing the paramount importance of reaching out to more of the world's peoples and communicating with future generations, he urged the international community to address the digital divide between the haves and the have-nots, and the "knows" and the "know-nots", and welcomed the support provided by DPI to such educational programmes as the Model United Nations and the United Nations Cyberschoolbus. In conclusion, he announced that a Model United Nations meeting would be held in Iceland that very weekend.

46. **Mr. Kafando** (Burkina Faso) observed that the reforms of the past few years were not an end in themselves but were meant to produce an Organization that effectively served peace, security and development. Thus, the restructured and redirected DPI must under no circumstances lose sight of the importance of re-establishing a worldwide balance of information which would result in information that was fairer and more effective. The Department must also not lose sight of the importance it must give to promoting the activities of the United Nations, which were often criticized and misunderstood. Nor should it disregard the fact that, at a time when new ICT was developing at a dizzying speed, millions in the developing countries, especially in Africa, depended entirely on the United Nations to learn about the world beyond their borders. The heavy use made of the United Nations information centres in African countries was sufficient proof, and the Department should proceed with caution in restructuring them. Needless to say, the States involved must be consulted, and the local, subregional and regional particularities and the specific role of each centre must be taken into account. The Burkina Faso Information Centre covered Mali, the Niger and Chad as well and had become a showcase for the United Nations in the region in general, having developed also a mutually beneficial partnership with the government authorities and civil society, and having become a genuine research centre for teachers, pupils and government experts. His Government intended to continue to work with the information centre to achieve the high objectives of the United Nations system.

47. **Mr. Al-Otaibi** (Kuwait) welcomed the efforts of DPI to make good the information gap between the developed and the developing countries, to inform the world of United Nations activities in the political, economic, social and intellectual areas, and to keep pace with the rapid changes in recent years in information and communications as a result of technological progress.

48. It was necessary to ensure a free and balanced flow of information, using information not in order to impose hegemony or to promote any particular culture or ideology but rather as a medium for dialogue and communication between peoples. Efforts were needed to close the digital divide in information technology between developed and developing countries so that all might benefit from the information revolution. His delegation called on DPI to redouble its efforts to assist the developing countries to strengthen their information infrastructure and institutions. The Department should also continue its efforts to highlight developments in the Palestinian issue and to give the matter due importance as required by the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. Equal use should be made of all the official languages of the United Nations, including Arabic, in the activities of the Department. All Member States should pay their contributions in full and on time in order to ensure that the Organization's activities and programmes were not adversely affected by a shortage of funds.

49. His country believed that an essential factor in the success of the information activities of the United Nations lay in promoting partnerships between the Organization and information institutions, both governmental and non-governmental, in the Member States and in cooperation between them through joint programmes to make the activities of the United Nations better known and mobilize the necessary support for them. On that basis, his country had supported a number of DPI publications and bulletins on matters of basic concern to the United Nations. His country had also taken the initiative of asking to organize the annual concert customarily given on the occasion of United Nations Day in recognition of the outstanding role played by the Organization in various fields. He commended the cooperation and coordination that had been established with the Department to alleviate any problems in the Organization of that event that would take place on 25 October 2004.

50. His country supported the efforts made by the United Nations to coordinate and consolidate its activities in order to achieve maximum effectiveness. In that context, Kuwait has donated a plot of land and earmarked a sum of $5,340,000 for the construction of a United Nations building to provide office space for all the agencies of the United Nations working in Kuwait. Work was expected to begin on the construction of the building the following month. It was hoped that that initiative would facilitate United Nations activities both in Kuwait and in other countries in the region.

51. In conclusion, he reaffirmed his country's commitment to the efforts to ensure greater information and press freedom in keeping with the traditions of society and its Arab and Islamic values and pledged his country's cooperation with the United Nations and its specialized agencies to achieve their objectives.

52. **Mr. Song** Se Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that the rapid development of information technology affected every aspect of life. Information was important for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the Implementation of the agreements reached at the World Summit on the Information Society. It must never be misused to infringe the sovereignty of another country or interfere in its internal affairs. Such encroachment upon developing countries by some nations with exclusive control over advanced information technology should no longer be tolerated. Such nations used information for their own political purposes, pouring funds and human resources into psychological warfare in order to impose their own ideological and cultural values upon others. Member States must exert every effort to make information an instrument for understanding and cooperation among nations and to ensure international stability and sustainable development. Information should contribute to the well-being of all humankind. Only then could its fairness, objectivity and accuracy be guaranteed.

53. International assistance in improving the information infrastructure of the developing countries through the training of experts, the transfer of technology and the provision of equipment would allow them to enjoy the benefits of the latest ICT. His delegation urged DPI to pursue its commendable efforts to strengthen the national information capacity of developing countries.

54. **Mr. Khomenko** (Ukraine), welcoming the restructuring of DPI and the reorganization of its activities, underlined the importance of its strategic communications service in consolidating peacekeeping and peacebuilding. It was useful for the Department to publicize new activities in that area, particularly in Africa. The Department's strategic activities would continue to be central in drawing attention to issues of global concern such as terrorism, conflict prevention, sustainable development, HIV/AIDS and environmental problems.

55. The United Nations information centres were very important in maintaining direct contacts between the United Nations and local communities. In Ukraine, the information component of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) office had proved highly effective in giving a picture of the United Nations and its major areas of activity. His Government was ready to support the integration of United Nations information centres into UNDP field offices, particularly in countries with economies in transition, in the interests of greater coordination, effectiveness and economy.

56. With regard to the news services, the Department was to be commended for continuing to update the United Nations web site, while respecting the principle of parity for all official languages, and to make it more informative, functional and visually attractive. The redesigned United Nations News Centre was an excellent source of news on the latest developments in the system and also a gateway to a wide array of links to news resources. The e-mail news service was also a welcome addition that gave journalists, researchers and the public at large quick access to the latest United Nations news.

57. His delegation supported the efforts to achieve a more modern, highly integrated and efficient library system within the United Nations. Collaborative reference services and the sharing of collections and resources would ensure immediate electronic access to the wealth of global information made available by the Organization.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.